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THE
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BULLETIN

VOLUME XXVI NUMBER 2 NEW SERIES 2005

FAREWELL TO THE GRADUATES
The Suburbs of Your Good Pleasure

IAIN R. TORRANCE

BACCALAUREATE SERMON 2005
Pick a Fight!

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The Sacrifices of Saul Thoroughly Examined

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Has Christianity Failed in Asia?

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VOLUME XXVI NUMBER 2 NEW SERIES 2005

Stephen D. Crocco, EDITOR

Mary M. Astarita, EDITORIAL ASSOCIATE

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Editor's Note

The end of the 2004–2005 academic year was marked by the usual number of retirements and new faculty coming on board, reminding us that we are here for a short time and, Lord willing, this institution will continue long after we are gone. Dr. James F. Armstrong, who retired in June after forty-nine years of service to the Seminary, may be an exception to the first part of the reminder. To put his tenure in perspective, he has been associated with Princeton Seminary for approximately one quarter of its history, which began in 1812!

Jim Armstrong is now comfortably settled in a study in Luce Library—a study, he is fond of reminding me, that was graciously offered to him by my predecessor in the Library! I am pleased to report he has embraced retirement as we all thought he would, by continuing to be of assistance to the Seminary by sharing his memories and expertise. One of Jim's students, David Janzen, has written an essay dedicated to his teacher and I am pleased to publish it here.

On another matter, it is my pleasure to introduce Ms. Mary M. Astarita as the new Editorial Associate for *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*.

STEPHEN D. CROCCO
EDITOR

The Suburbs of Your Good Pleasure

by IAIN R. TORRANCE

President Iain R. Torrance delivered this farewell to the graduates in the Princeton University Chapel on May 14, 2005.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR patience in this long process. I welcome you as new graduates of Princeton Theological Seminary. Long years of industry and assimilation have ended. I especially congratulate the Ph.D. candidates. The degree you have acquired is one of the most demanding in the theological world. All of you, new graduates, are distinguished and will bring credit to this school. I congratulate you all.

The world into which you are graduating is different. The mainline denominations are declining. Increasingly, people of faith are reluctant to commit themselves to membership. Many congregations already and in the future will not have their own minister. For some people the message is clear. The days of glory are over. The best thing you, as new graduates, can do is entrench, hold on to disappearing structures, and keep calm heads. In fact, as I think you know, I don't subscribe to much of that. You are entering a world of great opportunities. Matters of faith have been given new currency in public policy, in medicine, and in international relations. There is the greatest information revolution since the printing press. You are part of that revolution, and your skills and your diversity are needed as never before.

All of you are people who will make a difference. You have acquired a set of skills and a sophistication. You have a distinctiveness and an ethos which comes only from this place. There is no where else in the world where you can feel so supported by an outstanding library. You have gained not only intellectually; there is a range of intangibles as well. You have made friendships, worked in projects, engaged in field education, and enjoyed barbeques and crawfish boils. You have worshiped, preached, and sung. You have taken part in drama and debates, you have learned from distinguished faculty, and made international friends. You have also helped to see me through my first year here, and I will always have particular affection for the class of 2005.

All of you, when you walked across the chancel, became, in a sense, professional Christians. Faith and its associated skills henceforth will not only be a matter of the heart, but also of paying bills, leading, and formulating policy. You are people to whom others will look.

I want to say a very few things which are rather obvious. Don't forget that Christianity is not one single answer but many traditions. Our belief in the Word made flesh in the person of Jesus gives primacy to the personal rather than the didactic, to enacted grace and embodied truth. The fact that we acknowledge four gospels, sanctions multiple tellings of the same story, as it is dramatized in the faith of a community. Though Christianity has never wavered in its loyalty to our Lord, it has frequently wavered in understanding its own identity. As you know, early Christianity took centuries to form a classic shape. A Donatist tendency longed for a pure church, separated from the world. Pelagius and his followers called for "authentic Christians."¹ As Gerald Bonner so deftly put it, Donatism and Pelagianism "both contended for a pure Church, the one by external separation, the other by internal migration."² Christianity to this day has wrestled with a sectarian instinct, restrained, never entirely successfully, by a vision of catholicity, a belief that the gospel is for all people, that purity and unity are God's gift, not our achievement. A sense of the straightforward grammar of Christianity's historic embodiment will always stand you in good stead. Behind and through the tendency to Puritanism, my belief is that Jesus Christ offers us forgiveness and that God loved us before we ever loved God.

A week ago at Princeton University, just yards from this chapel, there was a short conference to celebrate thirty years since the publication of Robert Murray's landmark book, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*.³ Robert Murray's book was an exploration of the non-Latin, non-Greek Christology and ecclesiology of the Syriac speaking world. At that conference, Peter Brown, surely one of the ornaments of this University, challenged us all to ask what can the ancient Syriac church's choice of poetry as its major means of expression tell us about its religious message. The Syriac church, which was Nicene and orthodox, by an unparalleled marshalling of an entirely different set of allusions and metaphors, provided an alternative to literalism that is still of value.

I want to quote a short piece from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Portia was Brutus's wife, and on the night before the great event (the assassination of

¹ Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 52.

² Gerald Bonner, *Augustine and Modern Research on Pelagianism* (Villanova: Augustinian Institute, Villanova University, 1972), 36. Bonner quoted in Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 52.

³ Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). Reprinted by Gorgias Press, Piscataway, NJ, 2005.

Julius Caesar), she noticed that Brutus had something on his mind. In a famous and beautiful speech she said:

I charm you, by my once commended beauty
Within the bond of marriage, tell me Brutus,
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I your self
But, as it were, in sort or limitation,
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure?⁴

“Dwell I but in the suburbs of your good pleasure?” I cannot believe that a wifely rebuke was ever put more elegantly. Nonetheless, it’s serious stuff and may stand as a warning to us all. Despite its eloquence, Portia’s speech indicates the omnivorous nature of the quest for confidentialities, the urge to have everything declared, for understanding only one kind of hiddenness. It’s also gory and obsessive. So insistent was Portia to learn Brutus’s secret that she went on to tell him that she had cut her thigh, in proof that she could be silent. What kind of world is that? How modern and how sad.

Alternatively, there is the other Christian tradition, upheld by Queen Elizabeth I, who at a time of persecution said she would not open windows in men’s souls. This is the tradition of liberty of conscience, of respect, of understatedness, of tolerance, and of permitting silence to be a reply. In today’s world of sleepless search engines and the Internet, which knows everything and forgets nothing, such boundaries are worth respecting.

The enormous success of Sandy McCall Smith’s novels is attributable not only to a quirky wit—who else would write a novel entitled *The Finer Points of Sausage Dogs*, which my children gave me for my birthday—but his success is also attributable to his kindness. His Botswana novels meander around the life of Mma Ramotswe, who is observant, tactful, and alert to human foibles. In your future lives, remember that it is possible to be passionate without being fanatical. It is possible to be mistaken or just plain wrong, and I often am. There are those who revel in the city center and thrive on traffic jams and taxi queues, but, despite Portia, it is allowable and it is often wise to live in the suburbs.

⁴ William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act II, Scene I, lines 271, 280–286.

Pick a Fight!

by BRIAN K. BLOUNT
Revelation 2:18–29

Dr. Brian K. Blount is Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary. He delivered this sermon in the baccalaureate service at Nassau Presbyterian Church on May 13, 2005.

I REMEMBER THE JOY of growing up on a country road where a bicycle was all the transport a twelve-year-old boy needed to get him wherever he wanted to go. All my friends lived within biking distance of that road. And there were a lot of them. And all of them were boys. Little male chauvinists that we were, we were delighted that we didn't have girls around complicating our almost insane sporting activities or, even more importantly, messing with our heads. Girls tended to make a twelve-year-old guy think. And in those joyous days when school was out for the summer and we had free reign of all that country territory, I don't recall us being positively inclined toward the whole thinking thing. But whenever girls trespassed into our little paradise, thinking, and even the prospect of one day having to grow up, followed right behind. *But we knew our rights!* In Virginia, we weren't *legally* required to think until the first day after Labor Day. And growing up was so far away that the entire notion seemed even more farfetched than the outlandish adventures we often daydreamed we were living out.

Sometimes, when we weren't thinking up all sorts of ways to *keep from thinking*, when we'd played all the baseball or football our aching bodies would allow us to play, we became restless and bored with the relative peace that would descend like a dove upon us. I say *relative* peace, because it is never *completely* calm where a neighborhood of twenty or more summer recess boys are involved. Even the *relative* calm, though, never lasted long. You know how it is. Nature abhors a vacuum. Pre-teenage, nonthinking boys abhor even a *relative* calm.

Enter the brothers Minty and Charlie. I have two brothers. Minty and Charlie, though, were a special kind of brother situation. Minty and Charlie were identical twins. Brothers who live in the same room or who occupy the same back car seat on a long road trip can always be counted upon to get on each other's nerves and eventually under each other's skin. Brothers who essentially share the same nerves and wear what looks like exactly the same skin are only a lit fuse away from all Hades breaking loose. And since we were childish boys trapped in a vacuum where all thinking had been temporarily suspended, we carried around a psychological match. We made a situation where no situation existed. We artificially charged up some bogus circum-

stances that created a condition that would always cause considerable commotion. That's right, as childish as it now seems, *we would pick a fight.*

"Hey, Minty, you gonna let Charlie do that to you?"

Minty would know that Charlie hadn't done or said a thing. But Minty could *not* stand it if *we* thought Charlie could *ever* get away with doing something, even if *he* knew Charlie had *not* done anything at all. So, predictably, Minty would *usually* react.

Sometimes, though, Minty would be uncooperative and would not respond. It was that whole growing up and leaving childish things behind *thing* happening right before our eyes. As outrageous as it seems, Minty would be thinking. We, of course, couldn't stand for that. We wanted him to stop thinking and start acting.

"Good grief, Minty," someone would then say, "you let your brother treat you like that?"

If Minty would still demure, someone else would say, "Well, he is your *older* brother."

That line almost always worked. Charlie was, after all, older by something like one minute, forty-two and a half seconds! The brevity of time didn't matter. Minty hated to acknowledge that Charlie had *ever* gotten the best of him at *anything*. He was therefore *scandalized* by the fact that Charlie had beaten him at their very first competitive thing, the drawing of first breath.

"Minty, according to your mom, the doctor says that *you* were supposed to be born first, but Charlie tripped you up with his umbilical cord and raced out of the womb ahead of you."

The fight would be on.

Now as I sat in my study contemplating what I was going say to you this afternoon as we celebrate the class of 2005 *growing* into the role of seminary graduates and this embarrassing video from my past flickered across my now repentant brain, I wondered, if we were in a mood to rank childish behavior and childish things, what might be the least grown up, most childish feeling book in the Bible? Ah yes, Revelation. John gets to live in an apocalyptic never-never land out there on the idyllic, deserted island of Patmos, where he dreams up the kind of stuff that would make any twelve-year-old boy proud. I'm talking fire-breathing dragons who scour the global countryside terrorizing every human inhabitant within reach of its lethally bad breath. I'm talking multiheaded beasts rising from the abyss, crawling up from the ground like a horde of creepy, crunching-under-your-feet cicadas. I'm talking about a war that erupts between God and the dragon, and a lion God sends with angels to fight on God's side. I'm talking about a lion who, when

he joins the battle, wages war like a slaughtered lamb. For John, the fight is on. And the time has come to choose up sides.

Unfortunately, John has a problem. The problem is this: very few of the people in his churches actually believe that there *is* a problem. Contrary to what we used to believe, scholars are now pretty certain that there was no widespread persecution of Christians during the time when John probably wrote the Book of Revelation. Instead, things were *relatively calm*. As long as his Christians didn't profess and then live out their Christianity in a way that made them stand out and act up for the kind of world that God desired rather than the kind of world Rome desired, everything was fine. Most of the people in his seven churches were doing so well, were so politically, socially, economically, and spiritually successful, were living such comfortably peaceful lives as a result of their careful, courteous, conforming, compliant, coddling, accommodating *Christian* conduct, that they absolutely refused to fit themselves into such a fight. They had too much to lose. Even though John saw the world spinning completely out of control, even though he understood that the forces of darkness were set to prevail upon and destroy the forces of light, too much in the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea was *relatively calm*. John saw a category five hurricane blowing down the walls of creation itself. John's church people were in their living rooms watching *Survivor* and *Roman Idol* and listening to spiritual CDs. The very grown-up Christians who occupied and led those churches were *thinking* up all sorts of ways to commandeer the calm and wrap their churches inside it as though it were a spiritual security blanket woven in the dubious but well worn faith tradition of "I'm saved and that's all that matters." John appears to believe that the only way he can get through to this kind of pacified, pious people is to pick a fight with them. So, that is precisely what he does.

When you read these seven letters to those seven churches, you can almost hear John taunting the Christians who populate them. "Hey, Ephesus, Ephesus, come over here real quick. Know what I heard? Christ told me that you used to be a loving church, but now he says you're more like the Love Boat than the Love of God. You gonna let Christ talk about you like that?" "Hey, Pergamum, come here a minute. Let me tell you something. Christ told me that you're so stupid you have Sunday School on Monday. You gonna let Christ say stuff like that about you?" "Hey, look here, Sardis, you know I'm not one to carry tales or nothing, but Christ says your dull worship services are so dead that folk refer to your sanctuary as the empty tomb. You gonna let Christ disrespect you in public like that?"

Then, there was the church in the city of Thyatira. It was *way* too peaceful in Thyatira, because things were going *way* too well for the Thyatiran Christians. John tells them how impressed Christ is with their great works. They are such magnificent Christians that John needs a whole laundry list of terms to describe them. When John thought of the church at Thyatira, words like love, faith, service, patience, and endurance just came spilling out. In fact, if John had been preaching a sermon, he would have done well to have stopped right there. Everybody likes a little praise. I know I do. Everybody gets charged up to do even better when they get a little praise. I know I do. And John is very generous with his compliments. He loves this church and the people who make it up. He is amazed by all of its gifts and all of the great things it has done.

I find myself in a similar situation as I stand in this pulpit. I hardly know what to say to you people. Look at what you have done, where you have come from, what you have accomplished. Over there in Trenton, down in Camden, and up in Jersey City, they tell me they struggle with forty and fifty and sixty percent drop-out rates. And that's in some of their *middle* schools. You've stayed all the way through graduate school. Some of your families were probably starting to wonder if you were ever going to *leave* school. And now that you have, we're so excited that we've gotten all dressed up and had a parade. You've graduated from prestigious colleges and now this auspicious seminary. And you've done this, many of you, at great sacrifice. Some of you even fought the call to come to seminary, tried to live life in other vocations, and yet God kept pestering you, kept calling you, and you finally listened, and that meant you had to give up on the lives you'd once led. You had to sacrifice jobs, houses, careers, *lives* in the real world, struggling with heavy hopes and dashed dreams to come write yet another term paper on Karl Barth and answer test questions about which Bible verse came from what Bible book. The children of Israel had it easy. They only had to spend forty years in the desert. You had to endure three long years of seminary, for God's sake. Yes, for God's sake, you've come here, spent long, feverish nights studying, reading, writing, looking to *change* the world rather than *prosper* from the world. I have served on our admissions committee so I know the academic and religious records of the kinds of people who get into this place, I've read your papers, listened to your questions, chuckled at your theologiggles. I know how bright and clever and funny and faithful and hopeful and prophetic you are. And I know many of you leave here to go to foreign, incomprehensible, unknown ministry posts where you'll need to struggle with new ways, new customs, new languages, and new ideas. And you're the ones who'll be working in *this* country. Imagine the faith it takes for some of you who, like

our president, will venture to lands abroad to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land. I stand before you as John stood before Thyatira. Amazed. At your love. Your faith. Your hope. Your potential. What can I tell you now?

Where does a preacher go in the Bible when he doesn't know what to say, but he knows something still needs to be said? That's right, he goes to Revelation. Because John is a man for all seasons, for *all* Christians. No matter who you are and what you think you're doing, John can find a way to *jack you up*. So, just when you thought it was safe to congregate in this church, worship and celebrate all the great stuff you did before you entered this church, and all the great things you will be doing once you leave this church, here comes Revelation. The more I study the book, the more I think I know why Christendom finally decided after great debate to put it in the canon. They did it so Christians could never get bored, never get any rest. Just when you think you're doing all that you're supposed to be doing, just when you think you've got this salvation, sanctification, and celebration thing down to a prophetic Christian science, and you can lie back in your cozy, Christian recliner and kick your feet up on a comfortable communion credenza and relax, here come the beasts and dragons of Revelation. Revelation is God's way of saying, *You ain't going to sleep on MY sermon!!!*

And what better person to wake Christians up than John? As perceptive as he is, he looks past all of the good things that the Thyatiran Christians are doing and recognizes a critical problem. Though they are doing so many good things, they are doing them in a way that allows them to keep fitting in, to keep blending into a world that desperately needed to be changed. And, what was even worse, they had come to believe that blending in was exactly what God wanted them to do.

According to John, they believed it because of the counsel of a woman he had come to call Jezebel. Calling a woman Jezebel in the first century probably had the same effect as it would have calling a woman Jezebel today. You want to pick a fight with a woman? Look her in the eye and call her Jezebel. Go ahead, I dare you. I double-dare you. As a matter of fact, why don't we try it right now. Let's pass a piece of provocation. All you men in the congregation, turn to the woman closest to you, look her in the eye, put a scowl on your face, and call her Jezebel. I triple dare you.

We all know what kind of fight that would provoke because we all know who Jezebel was. Some people are so famous or so infamous that you don't even need their last names. You just need one of their names, or even a nickname, or maybe just some initials. Madonna. Shaq. A-Rod. JFK. SpongeBob. Jezebel was that kind of a name. Infamous in the history of the people of Israel, she married Ahab, the Israelite king, and then tried to evangelize the

king and Israel in the ways of her god, Baal. She killed Yahweh's prophets, confused and bewitched Yahweh's king, and tried to take away the religious affections of Yahweh's people. Now Jezebel was no doubt *not* the name of this woman in Thyatira. Most likely, she was a Christian prophet. *Just like John.*

The fight between these two Christian prophets went something like this. The people in Thyatira were economically and socially very much like most of you Christians in this sanctuary. While *some* of them were, most of them were *not* famously wealthy. Again, while *some* of them were, most of them were *not* tragically impoverished. *Most* of them were what we might call the middle and upper middle class of their day. They were professionals, and artisans, and civil servants. They earned a good living and, in going about their daily social and professional lives, they interacted with people of many different cultures and religious beliefs.

Of course, most Christians would not find it acceptable to go to a pagan temple and worship either the emperor or some Greek or Roman god. They had their own houses where they worshiped God and God's Christ, the Lamb. The problem developed in those gray social areas where the profession to which a Christian would belong gathered its membership for a social event. As women executives learned in the seventies and eighties, when male executives gather socially and recreationally on the golf course, there was often a whole lot more going on there than just golf. Networks were made. Advancement was very often enabled. The same thing was happening at these social, professional gatherings in first-century Asia Minor. Thyatira hosted a large number of trade guilds, and the people in those guilds tended to be very religious toward pagan gods. Therefore, when these "social" gatherings took place among these very religious people, religion was also celebrated. *Pagan* religion. Celebratory feasts were cooked in honor of the particular patron god of the particular profession. Some food was even ritually sacrificed in that god's or goddess' honor. The Christian professionals recognized that if they were to advance the way their pagan colleagues networked and advanced at these gatherings, they would have to be present, and if present, participate, unless they wanted to suspiciously stand out. And that's where the problem developed. Should they, in order to protect their professional careers and the social and economic lifestyles those careers enabled them to have, participate in gatherings where food sacrificed to idols was served as the common meal? Would eating that food in any way suggest that they were being unfaithful to their God?

Jezebel, the great prophet of Thyatira, who saw herself as having been called by God to this people, said "no." Since idols don't really exist, and you know they don't exist, why should it matter that you eat food that was

sacrificed to them? Go ahead. Eat the food. Network and advance. When in Rome . . . be like the Romans. Blend in. Move ahead. Accommodate yourself to your situation, the very peaceful and hopefully prosperous situation.

Jezebel's advice for relative peace and calm put John in a fighting mood. For John this was not a practical matter, it was a faith matter. It didn't matter whether the Christians didn't believe that idols weren't real. What mattered was that the *Romans* believed that their goddesses and gods were real. And if Christians didn't stand up and speak out against that belief, how were the Romans ever to realize their mistake? If Christians didn't stand up and speak out, how were the Romans ever going to realize who truly did guide human history and human destiny? If Christians didn't stand up and speak out, how was John and those who followed him ever going to convince the Roman world that the Lordship of the Lamb was greater than the lordship of the Roman emperor?

John is picking a fight. With his own church! He's *daring* the people in that church to stand up and speak out. He's *double-daring* them to make themselves visibly different from their social, professional, and political colleagues, knowing that once they do that they will invite upon themselves all sorts of criticism and persecution. He's doing it because he believes that only when they stop blending into the world that *is*, can they help God create the world that should *be*. He's picking a fight with *them* so they'll go out and pick a fight with Rome.

Rome had become an economic force that took advantage of the weak, an oppressive, occupying force. Rome had become *the* super political and economic power. It controlled global commerce. Through its military, it controlled global political destiny. It used that control in ways that brought benefit to itself and was often very destructive to other peoples and their civilizations. It wasn't just Rome's demand that occupied peoples religiously and politically honor Caesar and the Roman way of life. It was also that economically Rome robbed communities and entire peoples of their cultures and commerce, to maintain Roman wealth. This religious, political, and economic imperialism is what alarms John. He believes that his Christians help sustain it and even advance it when they blend in and accommodate themselves to it.

Whenever they look around at their friends in the Thyatira sanctuary, everybody appeared to be doing pretty well. Inside the walls of the Thyatiran church, they are spiritually fat and socially happy. Sitting at the Lord's Table, where John had left the coarse bread of Jesus' body broken for those who had themselves been broken, where he had left the bitter wine of the Lamb's blood spilled out to set free those shackled by human and spiritual bondage,

the Thyatirans were now devouring the buttery, warm, Roman muffins of upward social mobility and chugging down the cheap, Roman wine of tax-rebated, high-property valued, security-minded, people-not-like-me-gonna-be-ejected world of fine living. But outside, in the ghettos and on the battlefields, to many others, it looks like a fire-breathing dragon is on the prowl. Every time the Thyatiran Christians blend in, every time they eat a morsel from *Rome's* communion table, John believed, they were feeding and fueling that dragon. It therefore, in John's mind, becomes imperative that they stand up and speak out.

It is not, of course, how you look. It's what you do. You can look just like everybody else and still stand out from everybody else. I don't think John cared that his people looked like the other people in Asia Minor; I don't think he cared if walking down the street someone mistook someone who worshiped Christ from someone who worshiped the gods and goddesses of Rome. What set him off was that at the services where Roman gods and goddesses were worshipped, *there* you couldn't tell the Christians apart. What set him off was that in political situations where people declared their singular allegiance to Caesar as Lord and God of all human history and destiny, *there* you couldn't tell the Christians apart. What set John off was that in social situations where the power of the almighty Roman denarius set the standard for how people treated other people, where profitable alliances with the Roman money machine condemned some to poverty while it enabled others to grow famously rich, *there* you couldn't tell the Christians apart.

What about here in Princeton, or there, in the communities to which you will soon go? How *do* you tell the Christians apart? When Christians walk down a crowded street, how do people know? Do they blend in, or stand out? What *fight* do Christians *fight* that sets them apart? When a city, as do many major American cities, talks about how it is going to deal with the homeless, do Christians blend in, or do they come out of their spiritual and family homes to raise a contrary voice and present a defiant presence? When Christians hear talk of wars and rumors of more wars, do they exclusively fall on their knees and pray for calm, or do they also fall out into the streets and pitch a nonviolent fit? When a Christian president makes economic and tax policy that benefits those who already have all the benefits they need, does peace descend like a dove upon them or do they stand up and stand out for those who don't have the economic, political, and educational clout to stand up for themselves?

In a world where churches look the same all over the place, big buildings, big plans, big staffs, and those that don't have all that are aspiring to get it,

be different. Don't be just another Thyatiran theologian, be John's kind of vexing visionary. Make people nervous. Make people scared. Go out there and find the place or places where you know God wants you to pick a fight.

There are many who would say, we have a good life in this country, and we do. They would say that compared to every other place on the planet, we have a great society and democracy. And we do. But it's not the Reign of God. If it's not the Reign of God, if it isn't living up to the principles present in the Reign of God, then we ought to be standing up and standing out for those principles that represent *that* Reign. *John* was fighting.

Maybe you're not going to fight anymore about Civil Rights, until one of your children marries someone not from your race and your grandchild must endure a prejudice you've never known. Maybe you're not in the mood for standing up for gay rights until someone in your family acknowledges that she is gay and has to face a world every morning that fears and hates her. Maybe you're not going to get involved if the president decides to commit the nation to war, until they don't have enough warriors to fight his battles and the congress comes to draft your son or your daughter.

My problem with us Christians, well, at least one of my problems with us Christians, is that we've grown so decent, so orderly, so pietistically prim and proper that we've forgotten how to fight. We Christians need to stop smiling reverently while we and our world are being crucified. The passion of Jesus Christ is not a pious movie about a man who gets physically beaten down just so you can get spiritually lifted up; it is a social and political nightmare where the kingdom of Rome tried to lay human claim over a world that belongs only to God. It was a social and political nightmare then; it is a social and political nightmare now. Crucifixion is a bad thing. We've got to stop going to movies to view it, stop wearing crosses around our necks, under our ears, and through our noses to advertise it, and start doing more to try and stop it. Fight nonviolently, yes, but fight, for God's sake, for the sake of God's people, fight to pull God's people down from the crosses today's would-be Rome has hung them upon.

You know the issues; you know the troubles of our world. Are you, or are you not going to pick a fight with and against those troubles? *You know* about racial profiling and ethnic cleansing. Pick a fight! *You know* about global warming and heated issues of globalization. Pick a fight! *You know* about political cynicism and cynical politicians. Pick a fight! *You know* about international banking, individual portfolios, and global impoverishment. Pick a fight! *You know* about a world where the 200 richest persons hold roughly *eight* times as much money and assets as the populations of the *forty-three* poorest countries. What kind of *human* equation is that? Pick a fight! In our

own country, 1 percent of the people control 48 percent of this country's wealth. And that was *before* the tax cut. What are you waiting for? Pick a fight! You know about a world where domestic battering threatens the lives of more women than cancer, car accidents, and physical violence by strangers *combined*. Pick a fight! You know that according to the U.S. Census Bureau just a few years ago 41 percent of poor people in the United States were living at 50 percent or less of the poverty line. Pick a fight! You know that our country will go to war even when it has no clearly justifiable cause and will defend that war even when the murky causes it *did have* turn out to be no cause at all, and yet talk about the necessity for peace and calm and tending to our own business when hundreds of thousands are raped, beaten, and butchered in Rwanda and Sudan. For God's sake, pick a fight! I am telling you, we had better find a way to pick a peace fight before our world picks the next military fight. You know the Bible, you know the Jesus who stars in it. If pre-emptive war on the one hand and the allowance of genocide on the other hand aren't the kinds of things you think Jesus would have stood for, then you ought to be standing up in somebody's face *picking a fight*.

Maybe you think you have done enough standing up and standing out, until God sends you out into a new and dangerous world with ideas for doing ministry that that world has never heard of and, frankly, doesn't want to hear. If John is any guide, when God considers a candidate with capability, when God perceives a preacher with possibility, when God finds a prophet who possesses the potential for picking the good fight, God fires that person up. God doesn't just fire you up to pick a fight with others; sometimes, to get you going, even when you think you've already been going as fast and as far as you can, God even picks a fight with you. I believe God has done it just now. God has granted you graduation. Go, holding your theology degree with one hand and the power of the Holy Spirit in the other hand, and *for God's sake*, pick a fight!



The Sacrifices of Saul Thoroughly Examined: An Essay in Honor of James Franklin Armstrong

by DAVID JANZEN

Dr. David Janzen is a graduate of Princeton Seminary (M.Div., 1995 and Ph.D., 1999). He recently returned from two years in Guatemala City, where he served as a Visiting Professor of Bible at the Seminario Anabautista Latinoamericano. In the fall of 2005 he will join the faculty as an Assistant Professor of Religion at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois. Dr. Janzen is the author of Witch-hunts, Purity, and Social Boundaries (2002) and The Social Meanings of Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible (2004).

IT IS MY GREAT PRIVILEGE to write an essay in honor of Jim Armstrong, just as it is my great privilege to call him friend and mentor. Jim is always generous in his gifts of time, advice, and counsel, and this article cannot adequately express my thanks to him, something he undoubtedly knows since he had to read my dissertation. I count Jim among the formative influences in my decision to study the Old Testament, for he was my first teacher of both Hebrew and Aramaic, and imbued me with a love of and respect for these ancient languages. He is, as many of his other students have also observed, a wealth of information for Semitic linguistics. One disregards at one's peril Jim's advice in this bailiwick, and although it takes some thought to parse out, for example, his dictum that "Aramaic is like Hebrew but different," the thought is surely worth the effort. As a scholarly role model, he demonstrates to all his students the benefits of endless curiosity and the necessity of thorough investigation and carefully drawn conclusions. If my work here lacks those things, it is certainly no fault of Jim's.

It is with the issue of thorough investigation that I would like to begin. Thoroughness, as any doctoral student knows, can be seductive in a pejorative sense: there is always more to read, always a larger context to consider, and suddenly one's advisor is asking for a final draft of the chapter. The lines one draws to pronounce an investigation as thorough could be considered arbitrary, but hopefully depend largely upon the goal of the investigation. Let us take as an example the story of King Saul in 1 Samuel 13 and 15, where Saul makes one sacrifice and then tries to make another, and both times is severely upbraided and punished for his actions. The story of 1 Samuel 13:2–15 really continues a part of the story begun in 9:27–10:8, where the prophet Samuel reveals to Saul "the word of God" (9:27), telling him to go to Gilgal, where Samuel shall meet him in seven days "to burn up burnt offerings, to sacrifice sacrifices of well-being" (10:8). In our narrative of

chapter 13, Saul, who in the intervening week has become a king, waits for Samuel at Gilgal as Israel prepares to fight the Philistines. As time passes and Samuel does not arrive, Saul's army begins to drift away and so he performs the sacrifices himself. However, "when he finished burning up the burnt offerings, Samuel came," and the prophet asks for an explanation (13:10). Saul's account is quite straightforward: since his army was scattering and he had not begun the battle, "I said, 'Now the Philistines are coming down to me to Gilgal, and I have not entreated the favor of the LORD,' so I restrained myself and I burned up the burnt offerings" (13:12). Samuel's response to this rather reasonable explanation appears unduly stringent: "God established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom will not stand" (13:13). Saul's mistimed sacrifice has cost him and his descendants an eternal dynasty over Israel.

In 1 Samuel 15:1–5, Samuel again brings to Saul "the words of the LORD." Saul is to punish the Amalekites by destroying everything he finds in Amalek, animals as well as humans. When Saul and his army spare the best of the livestock—an act, Saul says, that would allow them to sacrifice these animals to God (15:15)—God responds by stripping Saul personally of the kingship. When Samuel brings this message to Saul, we find what might be considered the moral of the story: "Behold, obeying is better than sacrificing, to give heed is better than the fat of rams" (15:22). Saul had earlier insisted that "I obeyed the voice of the LORD" (15:20); after hearing Samuel's explanation he twice admits that he has sinned, and asks for forgiveness (15:24–25, 30). None is forthcoming; and when Samuel turns to leave, Saul grasps at the prophet's robe and tears it. Samuel turns even this gesture into a metaphor for Saul's fate: "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day" (15:27–28).

Our narrator tells us that this decision on God's part caused Samuel to mourn for Saul (15:35), and if the situation seems distressing to even the prophet delivering God's word in the story, it can seem more so to us. The literary critic Northrop Frye called Saul "the one great tragic hero of the Bible."¹ Biblical scholars Cheryl Exum and William Whedbee cite Frye's conclusion approvingly, and affirm that the story is "the clearest example of what might be called biblical tragedy."² The tragic element of this tale, they write, is the way in which God turns against Saul, even though "there have

¹ Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 181.

² J. Cheryl Exum and J. William Whedbee, "Isaac, Samson, and Saul: Reflections on the Comic and Tragic Visions" *Semeia* 32 (1985): 19.

been no indications that Saul was not a faithful Yahwist.³ Saul appears, in short, to be an innocent victim whose peccadilloes are far outweighed by his punishment.⁴ His story can be seen as a tragic one, the narrative of someone who, through the best of intentions, loses both royal house and then his own kingship. God can be seen in this story rather like a parent or teacher whose somewhat inscrutable will demands absolute adherence to the last jot and tittle of the divine word, with no margin left for even a single error. Why should Saul's acknowledgment of his sin and repentance not be enough? Is not the picture of Saul grasping for Samuel's robe really meant to be tragic?

By "meant to be tragic" I am, of course, referring to what our biblical author meant to convey to his or her readers, and in this context by "author" I mean the Deuteronomistic Historian.⁵ When one picks this particular context in which to investigate the story of Saul—that is to say, Deuteronomy through 2 Kings—rather than 1 Samuel 13 and 15 alone, or even the story of Saul and David in 1 Samuel 9–31, the portrayal of Saul looks rather different. In a context that privileges authorial intention, a thorough examination of what readers are supposed to conclude from the stories of Saul's sacrifices does not lead us down the road of tragedy. This context includes, of course, the History's picture of the monarchy in general, since Saul is Israel's first king. In the past, scholars traced at least two distinct strands in the story of Saul's rise to kingship in 1 Samuel 8–12, one of which was said to be antimonarchical and the other promonarchical.⁶ When Martin Noth first argued that a single author constructed Deuteronomy through 2 Kings as a history of Israel, he accepted this conclusion and went further to state that since the History blames the monarchy for the exile, we should consider the work to be antimonarchical as a whole.⁷

³ Exum and Whedbee, 23.

⁴ So David M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement, 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981): 124.

⁵ Nowadays one feels that references to the Deuteronomistic History should always be followed by a parenthetical "if there is such a thing"—its existence is something I assume here, although in the interests of avoiding a discussion as to whose version of it I assume, I write here of its final form. Those interested in at least an informal defense of its existence may consult Gary N. Knoppers, "Is there a Future for the Deuteronomistic History?" in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. T. Römer; Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 147; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peters, 2000), 117–34.

⁶ This was the conclusion supported by Julius Wellhausen in his *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1871). Other scholars adopted this proposal, although amended it; for example, Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Richter und Samuel: Ihre Quellen und ihr Aufbau* (Gieser: J. Ricker'sche, 1890) 167–88; and Otto Eissfeldt, "Noch einmal: Text-, Stil- und Literarkritik in den Samuelbüchern," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 31 (1928): 801–12.

⁷ Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (trans. Jane S. Doull; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement, 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981 [1943]), 63–74. For

This traditional scholarly approach to the History's picture of the monarchy thus makes the Historian seem somewhat confused, vacillating between opposing views of the goodness of the monarchy, and it seems as if there is perhaps some basis for this confusion in the text itself. In the last five chapters of Judges, for example, we find stories of a priest leading Israel in false worship and of a gang-rape, murder, and civil war. "In those days there was no king in Israel," writes our author, "all did what was right in their own eyes." This suggestion that Israel needs a monarchy is apparently so important that the History places it both at the beginning and the end of these five chapters (Judges 17:6; 21:25). We might thus expect a favorable murmur from the narrator when Israel demands a king in 1 Samuel 8, especially since the most recent judges of the nation "inclined after unjust gain and took bribes" (8:3), but this is not the case. The people's request "was evil in the eyes of Samuel" (8:6), states the History, and God says that in the appeal for a king the people "have rejected me from being king over them" (8:7). Attempting to widen our context for a thorough examination of Saul's sacrifices by placing them within the History's picture of the beginnings of the monarchy has initially done nothing except make the story appear more confusing, which suggests that we have not been thorough enough.

Since the law of Deuteronomy—which in the context of the History is given directly from God to Moses (Deut. 5:28–31)—allows Israel to choose a monarchy (17:14–15), it is somewhat puzzling to hear God denounce the choice as a rejection of God's kingship. The immediate context of 1 Samuel 8:7 gives us a clue as to how this choice is to be interpreted as a rejection of God's leadership—God states that this rejection occurred "just like all the deeds that they did from the day I brought them up from Egypt until this day: they abandoned me and they served other gods" (8:8). Now Israel states that it wants a king so that "we too can be like all the nations, and our king will judge us and go out before us and fight our battles" (8:20). The History is clear that Israel needs no king to fight its battles, since victory in battle is due to God's intervention alone.⁸ But Israel's kings do make it like all the nations in the Historian's eyes, for the narrator explains that God sent Israel into

more recent expressions of this same opinion, especially in reference to 1 Samuel 8–12, see, for example, Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 26–27; and J. G. McConville, "Narrative and Meaning in the Book of Kings," *Biblica* 70 (1989): 33–34.

⁸ Dtr makes this point explicitly in Deut. 20:1–4; for specific examples see Deut. 2:24, 30–32, 36; 3:2–3; Josh. 6:16; 7:11–12; 8:1; 10:8–11, 19, 25, 30, 32, 42. Nor does the situation change once Israel has a monarchy; so, for example, 1 Sam. 11:13; 14:23; 17:47; 18:14; 2 Sam. 3:18; 5:19, 24; 8:6.

exile because the people “walked in the statutes of *the nations* whom the LORD drove out from before the Israelites” (2 Kings 17:8), and “sacrificed there at all the high places like *the nations* whom the LORD exiled from before them” (17:11), and “went after the idols and were idolaters, and *after the nations* who were around them, about whom the LORD had commanded, ‘Do not act like them’ ” (2 Kings 17:15). In describing the false worship and idolatry of Judah, the History actually concludes that this nation did “*more evil than the nations* whom the LORD had destroyed from before the Israelites” (2 Kings 21:9). Israel has become like the nations, but in the ironic sense of abandoning the worship of the God of Israel, which has resulted in exile. To find out what these worship practices have to do with Israel’s choice of a monarchy and its rejection of God’s kingship, it seems that our thorough investigation must also include the importance the History attaches to worship.

The Historian clearly sees the exile of Israel and Judah in 2 Kings as the result of what the people have done in worship. It does not take more than a cursory reading of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings to notice that the explicit assumption throughout is that Israel will remain in the land only if it worships the God of Israel alone. The fate of Israel in the land is “cultically derivative,” as Gary Knoppers puts it, a matter that is clear from the beginning of the History in Deuteronomy on.⁹ While this book is clear that Israel is to obey all of the law that God has given to the people (Deut. 4:1–8; 5:32–33; 6:24–25, etc.), it continually links the threat of Israel’s loss of the land to its worship of other gods (Deut. 4:25–29; 6:10–15; 7:3–4, etc.). Deuteronomy 8:11–20 sums up the matter this way: should Israel forget God’s authority after having entered the land, it will manifest this forgetfulness by worshiping other gods. Apostate worship, in short, is the sign that Israel has forgotten who God is, forgotten that God has the authority to direct Israel’s moral life through the divine word. False worship in this theological view signals simultaneously the rejection of God’s kingship and the law God has given.

This is why Israel and Judah’s false worship has resulted in exile. And the History is clear that if the people must bear the punishment for their wrong acts, they were strongly influenced in them by the monarchy, which was their choice. The summary statement of the exile of Israel states that the kings “caused them to commit great sin” and that of the exile of Judah that King Manasseh “caused Judah to sin” (2 Kings 21:9) and “misled them to do more

⁹ Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies* (2 vols.; Harvard Semitic Monographs, 52–53; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993–1994), 2.232.

evil than the nations" (2 Kings 21:16, 9). The choice of a monarchy resulted in kings who caused Israel to ignore God's authority and kingship. If the History decides to focus its narration on how this was manifested through apostate worship, this is, in the Historian's view, simply a way of speaking about Israel's moral failure in general, for this worship signals that Israel has forgotten God's authority to impose the law upon the nation. Within this context, then, Saul's removal from power is not meant by our author to be seen as tragic, but as the first manifestation of the wrong worship and, therefore, lawlessness that will accompany the monarchy. The Historian makes it clear that Saul received a word of God to direct his actions in the case of the wrongly performed sacrifice of 1 Samuel 13 and of the wrongly attempted one in 1 Samuel 15. That Saul may have had the best of intentions in each case is not good enough for the Historian. In his or her theology of worship, Saul's choices in sacrifice indicate his refusal to obey God's commands completely. Here, worship signals one's attitude toward God's authority, and for the Historian, Saul's choices have declared that he believes that he need not recognize this authority completely nor obey all of the divine commands. Saul's explanation for his early sacrifice in 1 Samuel 13 may sound convincing to him—or to us—but for the History it is evidence enough that Saul is not a good king. In that incident Saul had argued that it was necessary to entreat God's favor through sacrifice, with the implication that this would ensure victory in battle. The Historian's recounting of this tale points to a very different meaning for sacrifice and worship: they communicate the way in which one regards God's kingship. When Samuel tells Saul in 1 Samuel 15 that obeying is better than sacrificing, he indicates that, for the History, sacrifice will not atone for wrong actions, just as it will not entreat God's favor, but will merely signal whether one is acting rightly or not in regard to what God has commanded.

Saul's loss of a dynasty and then removal from power prefigures the History's treatment of the collapse of the other dynasties that will rule in Israel and then the divided kingdoms. Each of the kings who rules in the North following Solomon's death causes Israel to sin by worshiping false gods.¹⁰ The fact (for the History) that God completely destroys these dynasties and leaves them with no descendants who could reclaim the throne is meant to be seen as an act of grace on God's part, preventing these families

¹⁰ Dtr, in fact, uses the causative form of the verb "to sin" to describe the reign of every king in the North except that of Shallum (2 Kings 15:13–15)—although since he ruled for only a month, the Historian likely concluded that he had little say in the matter—and that of Hoshea. Since the History states that the kings of the North caused the people to sin until the day of the exile (2 Kings 17:21–23), however, this inculpates Hoshea as well.

from exercising such evil influence again in Israel.¹¹ When one examines Saul's sacrifices thoroughly in this particular context—the author's portrayal of the monarchy and of worship—his loss of the kingship becomes not tragic but the result of God's grace on behalf of Israel to save the people from apostasy and destruction. For the Historian, how the people of God sacrifice is not ancillary to their moral lives, for morality and worship are intimately connected. Worship will not entreat God's favor nor atone for sin; instead, in worship we communicate important messages to ourselves and to God as to who we understand ourselves to be in relationship to God.

¹¹ Dtr explicitly states that all of the Northern dynasties are destroyed and left without descendants. The exception to this rule is the house of Menahem, which reigned for only twelve years (2 Kings 15:17–26). This house, however, was removed from power only twenty-nine years before the exile, meaning that it could not regain power since all of its descendants would have gone into exile. The doom of each house is pronounced in the reign of its first king; and the exception to this rule is the Omrides. Although Omri causes the people to sin (1 Kings 16:26), the destruction of the house is not mentioned until the reign of Ahab (1 Kings 21:21–22), likely because Ahab is a special case of evil for Dtr, adding the worship of Baal to the false worship that Israel was already committing (1 Kings 16:31–33).

Biblical Criticism and the Harmonization of Texts

by JOHN BARTON

Dr. John Barton, the Oriel and Laing Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oriel College, Oxford University, was the Seminary's 2005 Alexander Thompson lecturer. However, Prof. Barton was unable to travel to Princeton to deliver the lecture, which was scheduled for February 21.

WHAT IS BIBLICAL CRITICISM? In one use of the expression, this is clear enough. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as, “The critical science which deals with the text, character, composition, and origin of literary documents, esp. those of the Old and New Testaments.” In other words, what biblical scholars today would call textual criticism, together with what is technically called “Introduction” (*Einleitungswissenschaft*): the study of the origins, date, and components of the biblical books. But this is a rather old-fashioned definition now, and I think most scholars working today mean by biblical criticism a particular attitude towards the Bible, which distinguishes a critical from a noncritical, precritical, or (as is now sometimes suggested) a postcritical approach to biblical study. My question today is what we mean when we call certain modes of biblical study “critical” in this way.

For many people working in biblical studies the answer to this question seems fairly obvious. It can be seen in the preferred description of biblical criticism as the “historical-critical method.” The use of this term, which has all but replaced the term “biblical criticism” in much academic writing about biblical study, points to the belief that a critical approach to the Bible consists in applying to it a method essentially at home in the study of history. For many, perhaps most, scholars it is axiomatic that traditional “biblical criticism” has been dominated by historical concerns. Those who are now urging that a literary approach to the Bible should be encouraged often speak of the need to replace “the historical-critical paradigm” with a literary one. Propponents of the so-called “canonical approach” suggest that biblical study has become exclusively historical in its concerns and should become more theological. People who favor a holistic or synchronic reading of the biblical text often contrast this with the historical or diachronic approach that has prevailed until now in biblical studies. Feminist and liberation theologians, who believe passionately that the Bible should be read to promote human liberation, often contrast this concern with the “purely historical” methods of traditional academic study. On all sides it is agreed that history has provided the normative models for studying the Bible since the rise of critical study in

the European Enlightenment. Both those who attack biblical criticism and those who defend it generally do so by emphasizing its essentially historical character.

In this lecture I should like to question whether this is really so. Rather than approaching the question on the level of theoretical discussion, however, I shall begin with an extended example of what most would agree in calling a noncritical or precritical mode of biblical study and then trying to analyze why it strikes most modern readers in that light. From this it may be possible by contrast to establish the defining characteristics of a critical approach. My example is the practice of harmonizing biblical texts that are at least apparently inconsistent with each other.

I

From ancient times Bible readers have been aware of apparent inconsistencies in the biblical text. Jewish scholars discussed contradictions between the various bodies of legislation in the Pentateuch and between the Pentateuch and Ezekiel; everyone knew that Kings and Chronicles tell differing stories; and Christians were confronted by their opponents with the accusation that the Gospels were mutually inconsistent. The discovery of such inconsistencies is not the work of modern biblical critics but of many ordinary readers of the Bible from time immemorial. We know from Origen that pagans mocked Christians for having inconsistent stories about their founding figure, and already at the beginning of the third century Hippolytus had to deal with a proposal by a certain Gaius that John and Revelation should not stand in the New Testament canon because they contradicted Paul and the Synoptics. Earlier still, one of the motives behind Marcion's reduction of the Gospels to one seems to have been the desire to avoid inconsistencies in the account of the life of Jesus. It is in fact in the harmonization of the Gospels that the most sophisticated work was done in antiquity, and it has continued into modern times: a new Harmony of the Gospels was published as recently as 1996.¹

The attitude lying behind Gospel harmonies is summed up by Dietrich Wünsch in his article "Evangelienharmonie" in the *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, as follows: "The presupposition of every literary Gospel harmony is an

¹ O. E. Daniel, *A Harmony of the Four Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1996).

assumed *objective* harmony, in other words, the assumption that the canonical Gospels do not contradict each other in any significant respect.”² Or, as S. J. Patterson puts it in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, “A gospel harmony rests on the supposition that the four canonical gospels are in fundamental or substantive agreement . . . in their presentation of the life of Jesus.”³ That is to say, the harmonizer is aware that there *appear* to be contradictions among the different versions of the story but believes it can be shown that they are only apparent. Without an awareness of the contradictions, the question would not arise in the first place: the awareness itself is not at all a modern phenomenon. Harmonization is an attempt to deal with this awareness by showing that, contrary to appearances, it is actually a false perception of the textual data. Gospel harmonization proceeds along similar lines to Jewish harmonization of the legal sections in the Hebrew Bible, which are similarly known to contain apparent discrepancies. The hero of the Jewish enterprise is one Hananiah ben Hezekiah. According to the Babylonian Talmud, Hananiah consumed three hundred barrels of oil to keep his lamp alight while he worked to show that there were no inconsistencies between Ezekiel and the Torah, as there appear to be (b. *Shabbat* 13b).

The major exponent of Gospel harmonization in the ancient Church was Augustine, whose work *De consensu evangelistarum* was to become normative in Western Christianity. Its great predecessor, Tatian’s *Diatessaron*, was widely influential in both east and west. In the Syrian churches it was apparently used instead of the four separate Gospels down to the fourth century, but it has survived only in fragments and in quotations in other writers. It is also not clear that it rested on the great assumption of an objective harmony: it may rather have been intended as a replacement for the Gospels, which would imply that Tatian believed they really did conflict as they stand.⁴ Augustine’s work, on the other hand, is fully extant and undoubtedly assumes that the Gospels conflict only in appearance. His work is a lengthy and tightly reasoned attempt to convince the worried Christian that the inconsistencies are not real but merely apparent.

For the most part this work is not a Gospel harmony in the sense of a

² Dietrich Wünsch, “Evangelienharmonie,” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Fasc. 5 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, Inc., 1982), 626–36.

³ S. J. Patterson, “Harmony of the Gospels,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:61.

⁴ This is really a different sense of “harmonization.” On the distinction, see my “Unity and Diversity in the Biblical Canon,” in *Die Einheit der Schrift und die Vielfalt des Kanons/The Unity of Scripture and the Diversity of the Canon* (BZNW 118), ed. J. Barton and M. Wolter (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, Inc., 2003), 11–26.

continuous retelling of the Gospel story in the words of Scripture but rather a detailed discussion of apparent points of inconsistency in the Gospels—although Augustine does, as a sample of how the task could be accomplished, write out a harmonized birth narrative containing all the elements in both Matthew and Luke arranged in a coherent order. This represents more or less what the average Christian probably still thinks of as the details of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, with Matthew and Luke blended into a smooth story.

Augustine deploys two main strategies in dealing with discrepancies between the Gospels. Where there are similar incidents or sayings that nevertheless have significant differences, he tends to argue that they reflect two separate but similar occasions. Thus Jesus told Simon twice that he would be called Peter: once early in his ministry, as recorded in John, and again at Caesarea Philippi, as reported in the Synoptics (2:17). He preached two similar sermons: one on the Mount, one on the Plain (*ibid.*). At the tomb on the day of resurrection Mark tells us there was an angel inside the tomb, whereas Matthew tells us that there was one outside, and both are correct; one account is not incompatible with the other (3:24). From silence we may not infer absence, so that when Matthew tells us that two blind men were healed and Mark mentions only Bartimaeus, we may be sure that there were indeed two: Mark simply mentions the one who was known to his readers (2:65). Thus everything that we would regard as a variant tradition can be explained on the assumption that many similar things occurred or were said and that the evangelists were selective in which they reported, different evangelists making different selections. This first strategy results in a very much elongated Gospel narrative and probably requires that the events of Jesus' life were spread over a longer period than any one Gospel suggests.

The second strategy Augustine adopts has a rather more modern appearance. He suggests that neither the *order* of events nor the exact *wording* of sayings was particularly significant to the evangelists. So far as order is concerned, we find him dealing with the variation in the temptation stories between Matthew and Luke by arguing that the order simply did not matter to the evangelists: "*Nihil tamen ad rem, dum omnia facta fuisse manifestum sit*" (2:12)—the basic matter of the story is not affected by the variation in order, since it is clear that all three temptations did happen. Probably each evangelist remembered things in a different order, but this does not detract from the historical facticity of each event: "It is quite likely that each of the evangelists believed that he ought to tell the story in the order in which God had resolved to put into his mind the very things he was narrating, in those

matters for which, after all, the order, whether this or that, in no way detracts from the authority and truth of the Gospel.⁵

In a similar spirit, what matters in sayings of Jesus or others is not the exact words but the *res*, the content being communicated, and it does not matter if that is not recorded exactly. The “*veritatis integritas*,” the integrity of the truth, or as Augustine sometimes puts it the “*sententia*,” the meaning communicated, matters more than the precise words. “We should understand,” he says, “that what is to be sought and embraced is not so much the truth of the *words* but of the *things communicated*” (“*intellegemus non tam verborum quam rerum quaerendam vel amplectandam esse veritatem*” [2:12]). In the same chapter, Augustine discusses the words of John the Baptist: Did he say he was unworthy to untie Jesus’ sandals or to carry them? Perhaps he said both on different occasions, or perhaps he said both at the same time, but in any case the same point (*sententia*) is made by the two sayings, namely, that John recognized his own inferiority to Jesus, and “*Salubriter discimus nihil aliud esse quaerendum quam quid velit qui loquitur*”: We learn that we should seek only what John *intended* when he spoke and not worry too much about the exact words.

This is a slightly dangerous principle, which could lead to a certain indifference to the exact text of the Gospels; nevertheless it serves well enough to deal with a good many of the inconsistencies between them. It reappears at the Reformation in the harmonistic work of Chemnitz, who argued against any *ordiuis et temporis anxia ratio* (“anxious calculation of the temporal order of events”).⁶

Augustine’s first approach to harmonization occurs again in the great *Harmonia evangelica* of Andreas Osiander, published in 1537, which Wünsch thinks is probably the first work to use the word “harmony.” This completely eschews Augustine’s second method (indifference to exact ordering and wording) and insists that every word in the Gospels is to be taken as a literal record, pressing the matter much further than Augustine had done. Every variant account of an action or saying, however small, must refer to a separate event or utterance. As Wünsch writes, “As opposed to the Augustinian tradition, Osiander is unable to concede any distinction between essential and inessential elements in Holy Scripture. Exact attention is paid not only to the

⁵ Translation mine. Augustine wrote, “*Satis probabile est quod nnnsqnisque evangelistarum eo ordine credit debuisse narrare, quo volnisset Deus ea ipsa qnae narrabat eius recordationi singulare in eis dumtaxat rebus, qnarum ordo, sive ille sive ille sit, nihil minuit auctoritatique evangeliae*” (2:14). References in the text refer to Augustine’s *De consensu evangelistarum*.

⁶ Wünsch, 634.

contents of each pericope, but also to the external circumstances conveyed by it, since they too are inspired"; and again, "Osiander is unable to honor the Gospels theologically as differing writings. For him, on the contrary, the Gospel writers are simply delivery men providing the building blocks for a harmony."⁷

The result is, to our way of thinking, comic. Jesus heals the servants of two different centurions, cleanses the Temple three times, and cures four blind men in Jericho. His ministry includes four Passovers, for only so can all the events of the Gospels be accommodated, once it is assumed that every variant of a story represents a separate incident. Osiander set the tone for the many harmonies produced in the years of Lutheran orthodoxy, although Augustine's second, more "liberal," approach did sometimes reassert itself.

But Osiander and Augustine are at one in their commitment to the "objective harmony" of the Gospels. They do not feel free to change anything in order to bring about harmony; on the contrary, they argue that complete harmony already reigns, even if sometimes, according to Augustine, it is a *concordia diversitas*. The casual reader may *think* there are inconsistencies between the Gospels, but the casual reader is mistaken, as detailed work on the texts can demonstrate.

II

Our discussion has a clear bearing on how the four-Gospel canon was regarded in the early centuries. Niels Astrup Dahl wrote an article in 1971 titled "Contradictions Between the Gospels, an Old Hermeneutical Problem."⁸ Following Oscar Cullmann, Dahl suggested that the hermeneutical problem of inconsistencies was solved, in the case of the Gospels, by adopting a kerygmatic interpretation of them as four alternative "tellings" of the single story of salvation. We may see this in the titles, which do not say "the Gospel of Mark," but "the Gospel, according to Mark." But the evidence I have discussed tends to suggest rather that in early times the Gospels were not read as independent self-contained witnesses. Instead, they were treated as compendia of stories and sayings, from which material could be excerpted and recombined. What is even more surprising is that such a perception of

⁷ Wünsch, 631-2. Translation mine. "Anders als in der augustinischen Tradition kann Osiander keine Unterscheidung zwischen Wesentlichem und Unwesentlichem in der Heiligen Schrift zugestehen. Nicht nur der Gehalt einer Perikope, sondern auch die in ihr mitgeteilten äußeren Umstände verdienen genaue Beachtung; denn auch sie sind inspiriert."

⁸ N. A. Dahl, "Widersprüche in der Bibel, ein altes hermeneutisches Problem," *Studia Theologica* 25 (1971): 1-19.

the Gospels continued even after the fourfold canon was a fixed and accepted entity. Augustine did not feel free, as Tatian had done, to rewrite the Gospels into a harmonized form but only to demonstrate their mutual consistency as they stand. Yet there is little sense that each is a unique record of the kerygma. He does, it is true, explain the selection of some incidents in Matthew and Luke, respectively, by suggesting that Matthew is more interested in Jesus Christ as king, Luke as priest: that accounts, for example, for the different emphases of the genealogies (*De consensu* 1, *passim*). But in general he treats the Gospel accounts as all cut from much the same cloth and as if they were (to change the metaphor) simply four files from each of which information about Jesus can be extracted. Wünsch puts it very well when he says, "the authors of Gospel harmonies presuppose that there is no distance between the life of Jesus and its presentation."⁹ The same assumption can be seen very clearly in Osiander.

The problem for a modern reader is this. There is no sense in any of the harmonists that each Gospel tells a separate story which is incompatible at many points with the story told in the others. To say that Jesus healed one blind man really is to say that he did not, on the same occasion, heal two; to say that there was an angel inside the tomb really is to say that there was not one outside. This is because we think that a writer who went to the trouble of recording the presence of the one angel would not have simply overlooked the presence of the other and that one who wrote that one blind man was healed meant not "one at least" but "precisely one," that being part of the convention of telling stories. To our perception, the harmonistic attempt to combine the stories produces simply a fifth story which is incompatible with all the other four. This is because we have a clear sense of how the telling of a story works; we have a sense for genre. Even though we do not know exactly how to classify the Gospels generically, we know that they are not simply files containing facts but constructed accounts of the life of Jesus, with a plot and a shape.

Now it is this, it seems to me, that constitutes our approach as *critical* in a way that Augustine's and Osiander's are not. It is not in noticing inconsistencies that biblical criticism consists, for the ability to do this is presupposed by all harmonizing attempts—without such an ability the problem to which harmonies are a solution would not present itself in the first place; it is in understanding the nature of a written text such as a Gospel as a finished whole, with its own internal dynamic and logic. Augustine and Osiander are

⁹ Wünsch, 626, "bei den Verfassern von Evangelienharmonien wird keine Distanz zwischen dem Leben Jesu und der Darstellung desselben vorausgesetzt."

like lawyers adding up evidence from many sources to make a case; biblical critics are like (indeed, are) readers of literature, who ask how a complete account hangs together. There is no common ground between these two procedures.

There are faint anticipations of such a critical approach in the Fathers, most notably in Origen, who in this as in so many things was a modern critic before his time. Thus, for example, he explains the omission of the temptations and of the agony in the garden of Gethsemane in the fourth Gospel by arguing that John had a "divine" picture of Jesus with which these accounts of human weakness would not blend—in this he was developing Clement of Alexandria's famous description of John as a "spiritual" Gospel. There is here an anticipation of redaction criticism. But such explanations are rare in the Fathers. There is very little sense of what we might call the *integrity* of each Gospel as a complete story in its own right. The Gospels are seen as providing raw materials for the harmonizer to work with, not as literary "works."

If I am correct in the contrast I am drawing between the Fathers and the modern biblical critic, then the essence of the critical spirit consists in a particular kind of literary perception. The critical biblical scholar cannot accept harmonization, because it ignores the character of the Gospels. From a purely historical perspective, it is conceivable that Jesus cleansed the Temple three times; it is not conceivable that any of the evangelists thought he did, because each tells the incident in such a way as to make it clear that it is a unique event. It is *the* cleansing of the Temple, not *a* cleansing of the Temple. The fact that John places it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and the Synoptics towards the end is a real problem, because the two placings contribute to two radically different stories of Jesus. The discrepancy cannot be reconciled either by suppressing one of the accounts, as Tatian may have done, or by constructing an account in which both appear, as in Osiander. A critical approach to the Bible has to recognize honestly that the Gospel accounts are incompatible. This is not a historical so much as a literary point, and it is related to an ability to distinguish between the actual life of Jesus and all the accounts of it, that is, to recognize the evangelists as authors, not merely collectors of tradition. One might say that it depends on an ability to recognize the genre of texts. There is of course much discussion of just what genre the Gospels belong to, but in rejecting harmonizations of them we are showing that we do regard them as (at any rate, in some sense) coherent narratives, not merely as databases of sayings and stories, for if we regarded them as that, harmonization would not be so objectionable. And this perception of them is essentially a literary matter, not a historical one.

III

I may be able to illustrate the point here with another example, this time from harmonization not of the biblical texts but within the Bible itself. This is an example from the Hebrew Bible, which is discussed by Benjamin Sommer in the new *Jewish Study Bible*. In Exodus 12:9 the Passover sacrifice is to be roasted—neither raw nor boiled in water. But in Deuteronomy 16:7 boiling is actually commanded. In 2 Chronicles 35:11–13 the Chronicler shows that he cannot tolerate this discrepancy. Accordingly, in recording how the Passover was celebrated under Josiah, he declares that the sacrifice was “boiled in fire.” The practical effect of this is nonsensical, and it results in reporting an event that actually conforms to *neither* of the laws—just as Gospel harmonizations produce in effect a fifth Gospel that conforms to none of the four. But the important thing for the Chronicler was evidently that the laws had been harmonized, however ineptly. (Later rabbinic discussions produce other, more satisfactory, solutions to the problem.) As Sommer puts it, the authors of Chronicles, unlike most modern scholars, “view the Torah not as an anthology of differing opinions (comparable to the Talmud), or as a compendium of different sources, but as a single work, written by Moses. . . . Consequently they deny that a legal disagreement . . . can occur in the Torah.”¹⁰

This example, even more clearly than the harmonization of the Gospels, shows how much the harmonizing motive is a literary one. Neither the process nor the modern reader’s objections to it has anything at all to do with history. We do not consider the Chronicler’s solution to the difficulty unsatisfactory because he did not realize that the texts in question come from different periods, for example, but because he disregards the integrity of each text and treats them as mere raw material that can be recombined, even if the result is nonsensical. This again is essentially a literary perception.

Is not the same true of critical attitudes to the Pentateuchal sources? Great use has been made of the four-source hypothesis in reconstructing the history of Israel. The most obvious example of this is the work of Julius Wellhausen. By correlating each of the four sources with a particular period in the history of Israel he was able to produce an account of the history of Israel’s life and thought that is strikingly at variance with the surface account that can be gained from a straightforward reading of the text. Thus it is of course true to say that Wellhausen’s work was focused on history, and one can understand

¹⁰ Benjamin Sommer, “Inner-biblical Interpretation,” *The Jewish Study Bible*, edited by A. Berlin and M. Z. Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1832–33.

the use of the term "historical-critical method" in reference to the way he used the results of source analysis.

But this only makes it the more striking that source analysis itself was not produced by a historical impulse at all but by a desire to understand how the text came to contain inconsistencies and to explain them without recourse to harmonization. One of the basic source-critical insights is that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 do not simply provide raw material from which details of the creation can be worked out but tell two different—and incompatible—stories about the creation. A story in which humankind is created after the animals and a story in which it is created before them are simply incompatible stories. It was the accumulation of perceptions such as this that led to the now traditional source analysis, and it was only because that task had been accomplished—partly, indeed, by Wellhausen himself—that he was able to use its results in constructing his account of Israel's history. The original impulse however was not a historical but a literary one. We may recall that one of the very earliest attempts at source criticism of Genesis, by Jean Astruc, did not even question the Mosaic authorship of the text but spoke of "the original memoires Moses appears to have used" in writing Genesis.¹¹ In the nineteenth century history did indeed take center stage. But the roots of biblical criticism go back well before the nineteenth century, into a period when historical concerns were far less marked. The question that marked the beginnings of biblical criticism was not a question about history but a question about how to read and understand texts: it was a hermeneutical or, I would say, a literary question, bequeathed to us by the Enlightenment and to a good extent also by the Renaissance and Reformation.

IV

The point that harmonizers in particular and precritical interpreters in general fail to grasp may be put like this: certain types of text provide certain types of information. One cannot go to a text looking for a simple transcript of events: every text tells a story and does so in its own unique way. This is essentially a perception of the genre of texts. One finds this realization already in so early a critic as Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520-75), who remarks (*De ratione cognoscendi sacras litteras*) that in reading a text one must decide "whether it deals with a narrative or history, a piece of teaching or instruction, a text offering consolation or an accusation, the description of

¹¹ Jean Astruc, *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroit que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse*, Paris, 1753.

something, or a speech or something similar.”¹² It may be a historical observation or problem that points the reader toward such a question. Thus, in the criticism of the Pentateuch, the sentence “the Canaanites were then in the land” (Gen. 12:6) pointed many early scholars, both Christian and Jewish, to a realization that the chapter in question could not very well be by Moses, because it could have been written only in a later time. But this led to the question as to how such texts came to be written, then, if Moses was not their author. And this question could be solved only by a literary analysis of the texts. As Wellhausen himself remarked in a review published somewhere in 1897, “the supporters of the Graf hypothesis simply wish to place the three legal and tradition strata in the Pentateuch in the right order [historically right, he means]. *But the problem is a literary one, and must be solved by literary means*, through an inner comparison among the sources themselves as well as by a historical correlation with the securely transmitted facts of Israelite history.” Certainly history comes into the matter, but the primary emphasis is literary: the question may be a historical one, but the answer is a literary answer.

If I am right about this, then the primary quality differentiating critical from noncritical reading is sensitivity to literary genre. Critical scholars recognize the *kind* of text with which they are dealing. In the case of the Gospels, they recognize that they are confronted by narrative texts that do not consist merely of potentially recombinable nuggets of information but stories which have a certain kind of plot or shape. The antiharmonizing atmosphere of biblical criticism thus in a sense leads quite naturally toward what we might call “redaction criticism.” Another way of putting this is to say that traditional criticism anticipates much that we now call a newer, literary approach, seeing the Gospel texts as coherent stories in which it does not make sense to impute gaps into which material from other Gospels is to be slotted. Even if for some critics the aim is to discover the truth about the historical Jesus, they do not treat the Gospels as transcripts of the historical facts, as precritical, harmonizing readers did but regard them as constructed literary works once remove from the facts they claim to report. A critical approach asks first: What kind of text is this?

One can see from this, by the way, why certain manifestations of “biblical archaeology” strike many scholars as essentially non-critical, because they do

¹² Translation mine. “[O]b es sich um eine Erzählung oder Geschichte, um eine Unterweisung oder irgendeine Lehre, um eine Trostschrift oder eine Schelte, um die Beschreibung irgend einer Sache, um eine Rede oder etwas ähnliches handelt.” Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *De ratione cognoscendi sacras litteras*, edited by L. Geldsetzer (Düsseldorf: Stern-Verlag Janssen & Co., 1968), 97.

not ask this crucial question, but instead treat the texts simply as repositories of potential facts. I do not wish to imply that all biblical archaeology has had this character, but simply to say that when people accuse some of it of being uncritical this, if we probe the accusation, is what it amounts to. For example, it is quite common nowadays to say that a number of the writings of the Albright school, such as John Bright's *History of Israel*,¹³ are insufficiently critical. I am not sure whether this is so; it is far from being merely a retelling of the biblical story. But if it is so, then this is because Bright does not ask what kind of literature the Old Testament is, and therefore how far it is legitimate to use it in reconstructing the history of Israel. His dispute with Martin Noth—which nowadays seems rather tame, since compared with modern so-called “minimalists” Noth was scarcely less conservative than Bright!—this dispute was essentially about the literary character of the Old Testament. For Noth, the stories of the patriarchs were simply not the kind of material from which history could be written, but legends (*Sagen*), as Gunkel had called them. The argument was not about the facts on the ground as established by archaeology, but about the nature of the texts which archaeology was being brought into association with. This is a literary question.

The case is similar with the Pentateuch. Here harmonization has already occurred within the biblical text itself. But the critical move is to notice that the finished product is not a coherent work, and this is a literary perception. It is from this perception that the hypothesis of originally distinct sources derives. What source analysis does is to separate out strands within the narrative that do cohere, with a unity of theme and purpose and plot, and to suggest that these have been combined in very much the way Tatian combined the four Gospels to produce the *Diatessaron*. There is nothing especially *historical*-critical about this procedure; it is, rather, a literary-critical approach.

The study of biblical harmonization thus has implications well beyond its own apparently limited interest. It reminds us what we mean by calling an approach to the Bible “pre-critical.” We do not mean that it was unconcerned for historical enquiry: indeed, one of Augustine’s or Osiander’s chief preoccupations was precisely to produce a coherent historical picture of the life of Jesus. It is biblical criticism that stressed on the contrary the difficulties for historical reconstruction presented by the discrepancies among the Gospels. Nor do we mean that it was uninterested in the questions our opening definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary* identified as critical concerns,

¹³ John Bright, *A History of Israel* (London: SCM, 1960).

such as the origins and development of the biblical text. These too are matters in which pre-critical interpreters took an interest, as do their heirs today in conservative Christian communities. Very few critical scholars are as interested in, say, the date of Daniel or the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles as are non-critical or fundamentalist Bible readers. No, what makes the approaches we have been looking at pre-critical is their inability to engage with the literary character and genre of the biblical texts. By contrast, critical reading attends closely to just this question. Ordinary readers of the Bible can be just as critical, in this sense, as professional biblical scholars, by showing that they know what sort of questions biblical books can and cannot answer. Biblical criticism has its technicalities, but the underlying attitude that makes it possible is available to all.

My arguments in this lecture have one consequence that could be significant for the discipline of biblical studies. They suggest that the currently perceived rift between what is called historical criticism and the newer literary approaches may be much more apparent than real. Historical critics, so-called, have got into the way of emphasizing the historical aspects of their work, and literary critics into emphasizing the non-historical character of theirs. The difference may be summed up in the now customary contrast between diachronic and synchronic modes of biblical study. There are indeed examples where such a distinction is clear, but I suspect they are not nearly so common as often thought. Biblical criticism has at its heart an essentially literary focus, which can be traced back to its beginnings in a period that had not at all as yet embraced nineteenth-century scholarship's interest in the historical. The correlation of biblical criticism with historical study is an important part of the development of the discipline, but essentially an accidental one, by no means given in the origins of a critical approach. Modern literary critics of the Bible have more in common with how biblical criticism has been than they sometimes recognize.

The Coherence of Christology: God, Enmattered and Enmattering

by MARILYN MCCORD ADAMS

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THE THEME OF MY Christology is God's relentless commitment to material creation. *Pace* Origen, it is affirmed in God's creation of a material world such as this, boldly asserted in Divine insistence on embodied persons, boisterously declared in the Word's incarnation, and regularly repeated in eucharistic real presence of Christ's Body and Blood. God plights His troth, consummates the for-better-and-worse Divine pledge to material creation on the marriage bed of the cross. God renegotiates the terms, re-creates the bond between matter and spirit, domesticates the material into the household of the personal, pre-eminently and proleptically in Christ's bodily resurrection, thoroughly and comprehensively at the turn of the age.

Soteriological Starting Point

In the order of discovery, my argument begins with soteriology, with what I take to be the obvious fact that the human condition generally and Divine-human relations in particular are nonoptimal. Historically, nonoptimality has been conceptualized in terms of many nonequivalent and noncongruent conceptual schemes: purity versus defilement, honor versus shame, bondage versus freedom, debt versus satisfaction, sin versus forgiveness, guilt versus righteousness or justification. Western majority reports root human nonoptimality problems in sin, construed as the rebellion of relatively competent agents against God, and identify our psychospiritual disarray, our estrangement from God, our vulnerability to a generally hostile environment, and the certainty of death as punitive consequences.

My own instinct is to invert this pyramid. Imitating Job and taking a page from my earlier book (*Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*, 1999), I focus on horrors, the very worst evils, participation in which constitutes *prima facie* reason to believe that the participant's life cannot be a great good to him/her on the whole and in the end. My standard examples include the rape of a woman and axing off of her arms, psychophysical torture whose ultimate goal is the disintegration of personality, cannibalizing one's own offspring, child abuse of the sort described by Ivan Karamazov, parental incest, severe

brain-chemistry-induced clinical depression, mind-rotting diseases that first deform personality and then reduce individuals to vegetables, participation in the Nazi death camps, the explosion of nuclear bombs over populated areas, and being the accidental and/or unwitting agent in the disfigurement or death of those one loves best. Participation in horrors constitutes *reason* to doubt whether the participant's life can be worth living, because it engulfs the positive meaning of his/her life and penetrates into his/her meaning-making structures seemingly to defeat and degrade him/her as a person. My criterion is objective but relative to individuals, insofar as what crushes some may be easily endured by others. Subjective first-person horror assessments are not infallible. Spoilers and curmudgeons know how to make the worst of a good situation. But the participants' own estimates of how bad things are is weighty evidence of what is *prima facie* life ruinous for them. Insofar as meaning is partially defined by social roles and expressed in cultural symbols, what is horrendous may also vary across cultures that enforce different taboos.

Obviously, human history is riddled with horrors. It is rather easy for human beings to cause (be salient members in causal chains leading to) horrendous evils. Yet, horrors are disproportionate to human agency. An individual's capacity to produce suffering (horrendous and otherwise) unavoidably exceeds (both quantitatively and qualitatively) his/her ability to experience it. Pol Pot's psychic capacity was not large enough to suffer each and all of the tortures he had inflicted on millions. Late adolescent male soldiers lack the empathetic capacity to experience anything like enough to a mother's anguish as she watches them dismember her baby. Yet, where suffering is concerned, our capacity to conceive follows our capacity to experience. It follows that our ability to cause horrors unavoidably exceeds our capacities to conceive of and hence—because ignorance diminishes the voluntary—to be fully responsible for them. Nor are conscientiously exercised human wisdom, power, and skill sufficient to steer us clear of horror participation. However fortunate we may be as individuals, virtually every human being who lives in society is thereby complicit in actual horrors—the brutalities of war, the tortured deaths by AIDS of those denied the latest drugs, the starvation-induced mental retardation of children. These things happen even in America, because of the economic and social systems we collectively allow to persist.

My contention is the fundamental reason that the human condition generally and Divine-human relations specifically are nonoptimal is that God has created us radically vulnerable to horrors, by creating us as embodied persons, personal animals, and enmattered spirits in a material world of real or apparent scarcity such as this. Sin is a symptom and a consequence, but

neither the fundamental *explanans* nor the principal *explanandum*. The real roots of our nonoptimality problems are systemic and metaphysical. There is a metaphysical mismatch within human nature: tying psyche to biology and personality to a developmental life cycle exposes human personhood to dangers to which angels (naturally incorruptible pure spirits) are immune. There is a metaphysical mismatch between human nature and the material world as we have it, one in which the necessities of life and flourishing seem and are in short supply. There is also the metaphysical mismatch between Godhead and humanity, the vast gap between Divine and human personal capacities, which makes communication difficult and trust hard to win. Metaphysical mismatches are metaphysically necessary, in the first instance, a function of what things *are* and not of what anyone does. Yet, it is *God* who decided to include such mismatches in the world as we have it. We may ask, whatever for?

Cosmological Hypothesis

Such soteriological reflections drive me to a partial hypothesis about *God's creative motives and cosmic purposes*, namely, to the conclusion that God must love material creation with a love that dual drives toward *assimilation* and *union*. On the one hand, God wants matter to be as Godlike as possible while still being itself. Like any good parent with its offspring, God wants as far as possible for creatures to be like God and still possess their own integrity. So God makes chemicals and stuffs dynamic, plants and animals vital, human beings personal. Human nature crowns God's efforts to make material creation—while yet material—more and more like God. On the other hand, God's passion for material creation expresses itself in a Divine desire to unite with it, not only to enter into personal intimacy but to “go all the way” and share its nature in hypostatic union.

Attributing such an *assimilative* aim to God has the merit of furnishing a partial (if doubtless superficial) explanation of why God would create us in a material world such as this. At the same time, it has the defect of putting Divine intentions behind a project that is at first sight self-defeating. For creating a material world such as this and letting material creation “do its thing” has resulted in the evolution of embodied persons who are radically vulnerable to horrors. Put the other way around: personifying matter makes it more Godlike, perhaps of as Godlike a material kind as possible. But setting embodied persons in a material world such as this in which material creatures are allowed to “do their thing” makes the embodied persons radically vulnerable to horrors, which at first sight deprives their lives of positive mean-

ing. Letting matter such as this evolve into the most Godlike kind tends to get individuals whose lives are *prima facie* ruined. This raises the question why—if God loved material creation so much—God didn't settle for natural kinds that exhibit lower grades of Godlikeness but whose specimens are not so vulnerable to functional ruin? Why didn't God content Godself with pebbles and streams, mountains and frogs?

Happily, God's *unitive* aim already contains the seeds of a solution, insofar as it purposed Divine sharing of created nature in hypostatic union. If human nature proverbially straddles the divide between matter and spirit, God can share the nature of all creatures by uniting Godself to a particular human nature and so enter creation as a particular human being. God Incarnate shares not only our nature but also our plight in a material world such as this, the Divine Word also becoming radically vulnerable to horrors.

God's unitive aim drives toward personal intimacy with material creation. But because God's assimilative aim is *prima facie* self-defeating, Divine intimacy with human persons—among other things—takes the distinctive form of identification with us in horror participation, which *prima facie* defeats the positive meaning of God's human career. But Divine solidarity with us in horror participation weaves our own horror participation into the warp and woof of our own witting or unwitting intimate personal relationship with God. Because Divinity so mismatches creatures that a metaphysical size gap yawns between us, Divinity is a good incommensurate with both created goods and created evils. Likewise, personal intimacy with God that is on the whole and in the end beatific is incommensurately good for created persons. By catching up our horror participation into a relationship that is incommensurately good for us, Divine horror participation defeats their *prima facie* life-ruining powers. My suggestion is that retrospectively, from the vantage point of heaven, when the plot has resolved and is recognized to have resolved into stable and permanent beatific intimacy, we would not wish away any occasions of intimacy with God from the history of our lives. Victims of horrors will marvel at the vastness of Divine Goodness, at God's power and resourcefulness to make good on such meaning-swallowing experiences. Perpetrators of horrors will be able to accept themselves, because they will recognize that God has compensated their victims, even brought amazing good out of horrendous suffering, and that even horror perpetration did not separate them from the love of God. By defeating the *prima facie* ruinous quality of merely human horror participation, Divine horror participation also defeats its own *prima facie* ruinous effect on Jesus' own human career. Put more concretely and more biblically, because crucifixion renders its victim ritually cursed and so cast into outer darkness, excluded from the people of

God and cut off from the God who goes in and out with them, crucifixion appears decisively to defeat Jesus' claim to be the Messiah. But if Christ comes to save human persons from the ruinous power of horrendous evil, then crucifixion is precisely the sort of thing that would make His mission successful. If *God* casts God's lot with the cursed, the cursed are not cut off from God after all!

So far, my diagnosis of what ails us and my narrative of God's cosmic aims and soteriological methods participate in an irony worthy of St. Anselm and, I hope, of the New Testament! All the same, I have oversimplified and so now turn to amplifying corrections.

Stages of Defeat

For horror, defeat is a process that can be broken down into stages. (1) Willy nilly, Divine horror participation does turn merely human horror participation into occasions of personal intimacy with God. I call this Stage 1 horror defeat. This means that the materials for lending positive meaning to any and all horror participation are already planted in the history of the world here below; whether or not we recognize it, God has acted to provide it. (2) Because meaning making is a personal activity, it is not enough for the materials of meaning making to be furnished. They must be recognized and appropriated. Because we are developmental creatures whose meaning-making capacities are easily damaged and distorted in a material world such as this, because horrors at best stump and at worst shatter our abilities to make positive sense out of our lives, our meaning-making capacities require healing and coaching. I call this Stage 2 horror defeat. (3) Finally, the plot cannot really resolve into a happy ending unless the relation of embodied persons to our material environment is renegotiated so that we are no longer radically vulnerable to horrors. I call this Stage 3 horror defeat.

Historically, many spiritual leaders have seen the body and our material environment as enemies from which we should eventually hope to escape. In practice, desert fathers and Franciscan spirituals regarded their bodies as the battle ground with the devils and strove heroically to crucify their desires, to amputate involvement with them as much as possible. Even theologians who affirmed the resurrection of the body were far from consistent in assigning the body any positive role to play in heavenly beatitude. Once again, my soteriological starting point drives me in the opposite direction. Material creation must be good if God loves it. Personality must be good if God is a Trinity. The difficulty arises over integrating the two in human being. My contention is that personal embodiment in a material world such as this is so

costly to human beings that it is not enough for it to be a temporary episode to be left behind. If God is going to ask us to pay the price of *prima facie* personal ruin, then Divine love for us would lead God to make good on the experiment. Hence, my hypothesis that Divine commitment to material creation in general and to embodied persons in particular is relentless!

Christological Requirements

Stage 1 horror defeat is to be and have been accomplished by Incarnation and by Jesus' earthly career. On my account, the Savior has to be *God*, because God alone is the incommensurate good and beatific intimacy with a Divine person the only sort of relationship that can be incommensurately good for a creature. On the other hand, Divine solidarity with us requires God to become radically vulnerable to, indeed an actual participant in, horrors. To underwrite these claims, I find it more advantageous to follow scholastic interpretations of Chalcedon's "one person, two natures" formula in taking "person" *metaphysically* for the ultimate subject of properties and actions (the supposit), instead of *psychologically* for a center of consciousness (of thought and will). Christ's identity as *God* is secured, because the Divine Word is the metaphysical subject that supposits the Divine essence necessarily and eternally but supposits an individual human nature contingently and in time. What sort of human nature Christ assumed—whether one as Godlike as it is possible for a human nature to be and still suffer and die on the cross (as some patristic and most scholastic theologians assumed) or one much more like ours (and so not infused with supranatural knowledge, maximal virtues, and beatific vision throughout His life)—is a further conclusion to be extrapolated from the soteriological job description, the demands of congruence with Scripture, and philosophical constraints. Turn-to-the-twentieth-century kenotic theories take "person" psychologically and identify the earthly consciousness of Christ during His human career as the only one the Divine Word had at the time. Although their intent is to squeeze the Divine Word's psyche down to human size to get a better fit with the Gospel stories, they are in fact inhibited in this exercise by their moral sensibilities about which psychological states it would be pious to attribute to the Divine Word's only center of consciousness. Interpreting "person" metaphysically allows me to acknowledge two centers of consciousness (of thought and will) in Christ and opens the way for their contents to contrast, not only because of the metaphysical "size gap" between Divinity and humanity but because of what Scripture actually says about Jesus and what my soteriologi-

cal plot requires. Precisely because “horror participation” is not a moral category, it allows me to be more open-eyed about both.

The exigencies of Stage 1 horror defeat set up a presumption that Christ’s *ante mortem* human nature will be as much like ours as possible and that He will identify more with our present condition as opposed to some putative past or future utopic state. In particular, they imply that Christ must share human *vulnerability* to horrors—our vulnerability to animal instincts, the messy developmental process through which we move from infancy to adulthood, and the horror-prone material and social environment in which we live.

In fact, the Bible bears witness to Christ’s *actual* horror participation. Christ’s birth is the *occasion* of horrors (the slaughter of the innocents). Arguably Luke-Acts makes Jesus’ coming *occasion* the second destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus’ prophetic ministry risks horror perpetration insofar as subjective-world smashing at fundamental entrenched levels may mean the *prima facie* ruin of individual lives. The Gospels represent Jesus’ ministry as actually provoking His enemies to *prima facie* ruinous levels of self-betrayal (the Pharisees who were most bent on preparing Messiah’s way actually hand the Messiah over to be crucified). The Bible records (and history confirms) that Jesus lived in the Roman empire and so willy nilly was collectively complicit in the horrors perpetrated by Rome. What Scripture does *not* show is Jesus perpetrating horrors with malicious intent or outside of a Divinely purposed framework within which those very horrors may be defeated. Most obviously of all, Christ participated in horrors as a victim in His passion and death.

For most merely human horror participants, the fulfillment of Stages 2 and 3 comes beyond the grave, and thus *a fortiori* is not fully accomplished within the scope of Christ’s *ante mortem* human career. Nevertheless, the New Testament represents eschatological hope for Stages 2 and 3 as grounded in features of Christ’s life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Christ’s preaching and teaching the civilities of the Reign of God are outward and visible signs of the Inner Teacher’s growing us up into God’s family business. Exorcisms (the healing of the mentally ill and spiritually broken) are a down payment, signaling Divine power and intention to follow through with Stage 2—to heal and enable our meaning-making capacities and so to rescue us from permanent personal ruin. Johannine discourses on the mutual indwelling of Christ and the Father offer their relationship as a *paradigm* of the Divine instruction and Divine–human collaboration involved in Stage 2. Thus, Jesus says, I say only what the Father gives me to say, do only what the Father gives me to do: I-not-I-but-the-Father issue these words and these commands. Likewise,

Jesus' healing (the lame, maimed, blind, deaf, mute, leprous, hemorrhaging women), resurrection (Jairus' daughter, the widow of Nain's son, Lazarus), and nature miracles (walking on water, calming winds and waves, water into wine, multiplication of loaves and fishes), together with His own resurrection from the dead, are down payments on and signal Divine power and intention to follow through with Stage 3—cosmic recreation that places us in a nontoxic relation to our material environment, an end to the power of matter to ruin personal meaning.

Overall, Christ's soteriological roles combine with New Testament accounts of His earthly career to set these limits: (1) Christ could have only those human faults and psychological peculiarities compatible with such clarity of Godward orientation that people reasonably take Him to speak and act on God's behalf in His prophetic ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing. (2) He could participate only in those horrors that could beset a self-conscious, highly integrated servant of God.

Neither the soteriological jobs nor the Biblical testimonies require lifelong natural or moral perfection the way patristic, scholastic, or even turn-to-the-twentieth-century Anglican theologians suggest. Hebrews 4:15 (tempted but without sin), Matthew 4:1–13 and Luke 4:1–13 (the temptation narratives) arguably focus not on sins in general but on the sin of apostacy versus maintaining a Godward orientation. They do not, I submit, force us to claim that Jesus never sassed His mom!

Christ in the Hearts of All People

Horror defeat requires *changes on the outside*: for Stage 1 horror defeat, God-with-us, taking to Godself a human nature, identifying with our participation in horrors throughout His human career, culminating in His death on the cross; for Stage 3, God the Re-creator, transforming, replacing us in a new environment, a new heaven and a new earth, a utopia better than Eden, where the consequences of mistaken choices would not be amplified in horrendous proportions. But everyone agrees that human nonoptimality problems—that both the human condition and Divine-human relations are nonoptimal—will not be solved without *changes on the inside*, in the language of Ezekiel, new hearts for each and every human being (on my scheme, crucial for Stages 2 and 3).

Prima facie life-ruinous as it is, actual horror participation creates a meaning-making emergency, which stuns and often damages our meaning-making capacities beyond merely human powers to repair. But this is symptomatic of the general underlying vulnerability of personal animality. Tying

personality to an animal life cycle means that the task of organizing our subjective worlds in relation to the outside world is repeatedly thrust upon immature powers that are unequal to the task. At first, the organism probes blindly and instinctively; when it reaches a level of consciousness, its successive hypotheses ever oversimplify the data (from inside and outside its own organism) within its psychic field. The mind makes its task more nearly manageable by enforcing a conscious/unconscious divide. Our affective responses are “informed” by our oversimplified and caricaturing pictures of the world and/or issue from the unconscious, so that in multiple senses we “know not what we do.” Moreover, despite our evolution through various developmental stages, earlier and cruder pictures along with their distorted responses become entrenched and are ready and waiting to “kick in” when our situation seems dire. My conclusion is that we humans need not only emergency assistance to recover from the crisis of actual horror participation but a helper, a companion and live-in teacher to enable, guide, and work with us all along.

My cosmological hypothesis allows me to give such necessity a positive spin, to view it not as a design flaw but as an integration of God’s unitive and assimilative aims. A God who wanted matter to be as Godlike as possible while still being itself might prioritize *independence* as a dimension of imitation. We might expect such a God to make an Aristotelian universe in which created natures consist of packages of powers that operate always or for the most part to reach their resultant end. No special Divine intervention—over and above creation, conservation, and general concurrence—would be required for earth to seek its center or fire to heat nearby combustibles. Likewise, further Divine assistance would not be needed for normal human functioning, for us to formulate and apply general principles and exercise our capacities for free choice. Our current predicament, which is much further from optimal, would have to be and traditionally was accounted for in terms of some cosmic disaster, namely, Adam’s fall.

Yet there are plenty of reasons for thinking that God might not prioritize independence. Certainly, medieval philosophical theology offers us a God whose Divine functions are exercised independently of any causal influence or assistance from creatures. But that does not make Divine functioning utterly independent, insofar as the Divine persons necessarily function in consort with one another. Western Trinitarian theology understands the Divine persons so to co-inhere that there is one action, one will *ad extra*. More than independence, God might want personal creatures to imitate trinitarian co-inherence and so deliberately design us for *functional collaboration* with Godself. Such assimilation would serve God’s unitive aim. Not

only would God join Godself to creation via hypostatic union with an individual human nature, or act together with every secondary cause in the production of its effect, but God would also insinuate Godself into the intimate personal functioning of every human being. Whether or not noticed and consciously engaged, God would be a senior partner in our efforts to harmonize the material and spiritual dimensions of ourselves and to make positive sense out of our lives.

This idea is not novel. Augustine asserts that human nature is “designed” to require an “Inner Teacher” to grasp the immutable truths of ethics and mathematics and, by extension, the essences of created natural kinds. Bonaventure agrees that God must illumine our intellects to disclose such *a priori* truths and to furnish the standards for our value judgments. Human thought and evaluation are so God-infested that in the *Itinerarium* Bonaventure wonders aloud how any human being can fail to be aware of it. In between, Anselm seems to make Divine inputs the trigger of *intellectual imagination*. In the *Monologion*, and yet more explicitly in the *Proslogion*, Anselm questions God from many and various angles; there follows Divine disclosure that he must struggle to articulate and that clarifies by reframing the puzzling material. Anselm then questions and disputes these results, then waits for another Divine disclosure, which reconfigures, complexifies, and integrates the conceptual field. For these thinkers, Divine illumination neither interferes nor interrupts nor miraculously furnishes what natural but malfunctioning powers were supposed to supply. Rather, Divine illumination is a piece of the natural process, and the highest human functioning involves the active collaboration of God.

My proposal generalizes Anselm’s picture—of the Divine gadfly collaborating with humans to conceive and give birth to imaginative reconfiguration—to the more comprehensive human function of meaning-making, to the construction of the human agent’s subjective world, and hence to the structure of his or her self. Developmental psychology already teaches us how *human personality is by nature functionally inclusive*, how the personal potential of human infants has to be drawn out of them by personal caretakers who treat them as persons. Experience shows how it takes a variety of personal relationships to bring out the richness, how persons become peculiar and often “lose it” if they isolate themselves from others, how feral human children do not become persons at all. Both medieval (Richard of St. Victor, Aelred of Rivaulex, and Julian of Norwich) and turn-to-the-twentieth-century British sources (R.C. Moberly, P.T. Forsyth, and William Temple) forward the models of friendship and mother–infant relations to fill out the notions of the mutual indwelling of persons. The Divine design goal is for this func-

tional collaboration to become increasingly conscious and voluntary, so to move toward a friendship of shared outlook and purpose that Christ becomes the organizing center of our personalities, I-not-I-but-Christ (Gal. 2:18–20).

Divine indwelling of each and every created person also bears social fruits on the outside, insofar as its work within each is coordinated toward the harmonizing transformation of each move toward wholesome community (Stage 3 defeat). In the manner envisaged by Aelred of Rievaulx, pairs and groups of individuals committed to growing in the knowledge and love of Christ can grow together into functional organs of Christ's Body in the world.

The role of Inner Teacher is filled by Christ according to His Divine nature. Metaphysically, if the Western Trinity has one action, one will *ad extra*, this means this activity can belong no more to the Second Person of the Trinity than to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Scripture bears witness to Divine agency within our hearts and—as Moberly points out—often connects it with Christ or the Spirit of Christ. For example, I John 3:24 (Christ abides in us by His Spirit) and I John *passim* speak of the abiding and indwelling of Christ. Other New Testament texts also identify the Spirit of God with the Spirit of Christ, for example, Acts 16:7 (the Spirit of Jesus); 2 Corinthians 3:17–18 (The Lord is the Spirit, and the Lord is the transfigured One); Galatians 4:6 (The Spirit of His Son cries, “Abba, Father”); Philemon 1:19 (the Spirit of Jesus Christ), I Peter 1:10–11 (the Spirit of Christ). But authorial meanings are unclear, and Scripture underdetermines the matter.

To speak of *Christ* dwelling in our hearts is to engage in the ancient practice of appropriation, of specially associating with one Divine person an activity that belongs to all. My own justification for this is that Christ is the One Who shares our human nature. Christ's friendship with His disciples during His earthly career was mediated by His human personality. It is within the framework of His human personality that God especially befriends the whole human race, not least by sharing both our vulnerability to and our actual participation in horrors. It is natural to think and speak, as Moberly does, of this very friendship continuing in a new, even more intimate way, with personal omnipresence and functional collaboration: I-not-I-but-Christ. Although such inward teaching and assistance calls upon the resources—the knowledge and power—of Christ's Divine nature, it is natural to treasure the friendship as bivalent: at once with Someone powerful and resourceful enough to trample the chaos and calm the storm of our inward functional organization and yet with Someone to Whom the human experience is not alien, Someone to Whom the worst has happened, Someone to Whom a human nature still belongs.

Christ for the World

Colossians forwards the cosmic Christ, the One in Whom all things hold together (Col. 1:17). Traditional two-natures Christology divides the labor. Patristic and medieval authors see the unity of the universe as depending on all-encompassing causal and excellence hierarchies, which culminate in a first efficient cause that is identical to the most excellent being. All things hold together in *Christ qua Divine*, insofar as He is the middle (*medium*) of the Trinity—a produced product; the first efficient cause of all creation; the first final cause as the end of all things, for whose sake they exist; along with other persons of the Trinity, the most excellent being; and—as perfect likeness of the Father—also the exemplar cause of all creation.

Twelfth-century minority reporters (probably Honorius of Autun and Rupert of Deutz) argue that the cosmos holds together in Christ another way, insofar as Godhead longs to make a world such as ours and to share its nature. They appeal to biblical notions, first, that we are *adoptive* children of God, which—they claim—involves not merely a harmony of wills (such as exists among friends) but a sameness of nature with the natural Son. Since we cannot take on the Divine nature, the natural Son must take on ours. Again, we are members of the *body* of which Christ is the *head*; but head and members of a body share the same nature. Again, Christ is *head* not only of the Church but of the universe as a whole. By hypostatic union with a human nature, Christ shares not only spiritual nature with angels and human souls but also—insofar as the human body includes all of the material elements—material nature with all of the material creatures.

Thus, in *Christ qua God-man*, God enters into the cosmos to become part of it in such a way as to somehow share the nature of all of it. These twelfth-century authors argue that nature sharing would be part of God's cosmic purpose, even if creatures had never sinned. Aquinas and Bonaventure, who hesitate but in the end do not endorse the "Incarnation anyway" conclusion, still hold that God unites Godself to creation in human being because it straddles both material and spiritual worlds.

Despite many and various differences about the nature of atonement, patristic and medieval theologians (not to mention my favorite turn-to-the-twentieth-century Anglicans) hold that *Christ qua God-man* is the One Who holds the soteriological plot together. On my theory, Christ is the One in Whom *we* hold together, insofar as His Incarnation and earthly career accomplishes Stage 1 horror defeat, and Christ dwelling within the inner man, the Inner Teacher, works to heal and to help us toward Stage 2 horror defeat, by becoming the organizational center of our personalities.

For Stage 3 horror defeat, the cosmos must hold together in a utopic manner, in which the good of individuals is not merely sacrificed to but integrated with the good of the whole. Horror participants must have lives that are great goods to them on the whole and in the end, lives within the context that horror participation is defeated. Furthermore, human relations to our material environment must be transformed so that we are no longer radically vulnerable to horrors. Taking my cue from apocalyptic theology, I posit a “two-age theory.” *Experience* strongly suggests that the present era is one in which material creatures are always or for the most part left alone “to do their thing,” even when this becomes *prima facie* ruinous to personal creatures. *Systematic* considerations demand that there be a new era in which material creation is no longer permitted such unrestrained self-assertion.

One image of this renegotiated situation is found in the medieval life of St. Francis of Assisi, who is there portrayed—among other things—as minister general of a cosmic OFM (Order of Friars Minor). All creatures are *friars minor*, metaphysically minuscule in relation to God. But all creatures—animate and inanimate, personal and nonrational animals—are *friars minor*, brothers and sisters alike because they are adopted children of “our Father in heaven.” For Francis, this means that all are to be treated with courtesy, as welcome in the world, because of God’s decision to create and sustain them, as entitled to space and time to engage in their natural functions. For Francis, this means also that all creatures share a vocation to praise God as much as they can. But being drawn up into the household of God is *supra*-natural. It involves domestication into a way of life beyond that for which we are naturally suited. Domestication (e.g., of pets) involves some restraint or inhibition of natural tendencies (e.g., house-breaking; not chasing, biting, or scratching humans). But the domesticated creatures are not simply frustrated. They “get something out of it,” insofar as they are treated with greater dignity and elevated to a higher status. The eschatological pictures—of lion lying down with the lamb, of snakes that do not bite and poison babies—forecast an end to predatory behavior in a new world order that opens fresh possibilities for flourishing.

It would be merely metaphorical to imagine nonrational creatures exercising *self*-restraint. In the age to come, it will be the Divine domesticator who curtails their exercise of natural powers. Where the harmonious integration of personal with material in human beings is concerned, the situation is different. Augustine envisions the souls of prefall Adam and Eve as having power to keep body and soul together, power to repel external forces that harm the body, and power to preserve the body from corruption. Aquinas sees the human soul as receiving infused habits and gifts that strengthen and

stabilize its control over the body. My suggestion is not that the soul recovers in heaven the powers of self-control it is supposed to have had in Eden. Instead, the I-not-I-but Christ partnership ever more consciously and intentionally entered into, will work from the inside to transfigure the embodiment of our personhood so that we are no longer radically vulnerable to horrors. John's Jesus speaks of such mutual indwelling of the Son with the Father that He is able to lay down His life and take it up again. The history of spirituality also bears witness. Desert fathers and mothers Saints Francis and Clare so strive into God, are so rapt in the Spirit, indwell and are indwelt by Christ with such intensity that their bodies glow, even become fiery. St. Francis and others receive the stigmata, a mirror on the outside how they have crucified the flesh and all its desires. Ascetics become able to survive on extremely small amounts of bread and water. The resurrected Christ of the Gospels sums it all up as promise and downpayment: embodied yet no longer vulnerable, horror-torn yet glorified, walking through doors, appearing and disappearing, yet eating and drinking and present to be touched. Horror participants should not wonder that St. Paul quipped, "Without the resurrection, our faith is vain" (I Cor. 15:12-19)!

Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar

Horrors threaten to ruin human lives. Horror participation strains Divine-human relations to the breaking point. Cult is focal for Divine-human relationship development. It is a scene of close encounters: even if God is supposed to be everywhere, Divine presence and influence are certainly not confined to temple precincts; there is still the notion that by coming to the holy place one is *drawing near* to God. Cult is a scene of obstacle removals; most notably, cult defines the etiquette that allows humans and divinities to share the same social space, and that furnishes ritual remedies by means of which offenses and disabling conditions can be recontextualized and removed. Cult is a scene of covenant making, of covenant renewal, and payment of vows. It is also a scene of thanks and praise, of celebration and consummation.

Sacrifice makes *material* the medium of Divine-human exchange. Sacraments are outward and visible, *material* signs. Even "low church" ceremony has stage and props and costumes, dramatic gestures, prescribed and characteristic intonations and patterns of speech. Yet, historically, the material dimension of these rites is repeatedly disparaged, critiqued and contrasted with *personal* devotion and *spiritual* worship. Focus on material piety is held to be *theoretically naive*. Its time-immemorial conviction—that sacrificial

offering turns material things into bearers and transmitters of positive or negative supranatural spiritual charge—has been dismissed as *primitive*, *superstitious*, and *unscientific*, of running contrary to what we *know* about how the world works. Likewise, it is judged to be *practically pernicious*. Besides flying in the face of reason and experience, protestant reformers charged that medieval theories of transubstantiation combined with anti-Donatist assertions of *ex opere operato* to turn the eucharist into a *magic* rite in which the priest mumbles the incantation—“*hocus pocus*” was their mocking contraction of “*hoc est corpus meum*”—to summon occult power to produce effects for good or ill apart from faith and beyond our knowledge. Reformers also warn that such material piety leads to *idolatry* as evidenced in eucharistic veneration, solemn benediction, and Corpus Christi processions. Biblical prophets inveigh against Israel for putting confidence in temple cult and animal sacrifice, Jesus against Pharisees who tithe dill, mint, and cumin while neglecting to do justice, love, and kindness and walk humbly with God. Jesus charges (e.g., Matt. 6 and 23) that such inverted priorities lead to *hypocrisy*, which turns outward and visible observance into lying signs. But God looks on the heart!

Nevertheless, the dichotomy between the material versus the personal is bogus: false to human nature as personified matter, enmattered spirit; and false to our *ante mortem* predicament in a material world that “breaks out” on us with personal ruin despite our good intentions and beyond our power to control or prevent. God may be Spirit, but horrors can be defeated only if God is willing to meet us where we are, embodied person to embodied person, and to accept the material stuff of our lives as a medium of traffic between us!

I suggest that the God Who asks us “to go all the way,” with matter to the cross of horrendous evil, continues the incarnation in eucharistic real presence—not by transubstantiation but by *impanation*, which hypostatically unites bread and wine natures to the Divine Word, so that they literally become Christ’s Body and Blood. My theological reason for embracing the minority-report doctrine of impanation is straightforward: transubstantiation literally locates the Body and Blood of Christ where the bread and wine were and still seem to be but denies them extension and so robs us of the possibility of literally seeing, touching, and handling. Impanation acknowledges that Christ’s Body and Blood are literally extended according to their bread and wine natures, not only literally capable—as in *Ego Berengarius*—of being broken by the hands of priests and crushed by the teeth of the faithful, but also literally available for comforting contact, literally the object of the adoring gaze and passionate kiss.

Reformers who disparage corporeal eucharistic presence would have known better if only they had taken their preferred eucharistic rubrics—"the Lord's supper," or "the holy banquet"—to heart. The Lord's table is a groaning board, set with the Heavenly Father's provisions, where adoptive sons and daughters gather to eat, drink, and be satisfied, to commune with God and one another. Partaking of it is a calling angels cannot share: lacking bodies, they do not biologically reproduce or come in families; as pure spirits, they have no need to eat. By contrast, family dinner tables figure deeply in the psycho-spiritual formation of human beings, because they are places where we meet as *embodied* persons, to eat and drink, bite and chew our way into who we are. For us human beings, outward and visible eating is no mere sign of inward and spiritual realities. Eating together *is* a risk of vulnerability: opening our mouths and taking something in betrays the fact that we are not self-contained, that the boundaries that define our bodies can be sustained only if they are regularly compromised. Sharing food binds clans together: by eating food that could have sustained your life, I ingest part of your life, take it into myself, and vice versa. Consuming food that you have prepared *is* an act of trust that you are not giving me poison. Receiving food from one another *enacts* our covenant to treat one another as friends and not enemies or strangers. Willy-nilly, family dinner tables forge deep ties through feeding and being fed, links reinforced through many seasons, from infancy to Alzheimer's, for better and for worse, in good times and bad. Meant to nurture, family dinner tables are easily perverted into scenes of abuse, where boundaries are violated, where family members eat at each other, bite one another's heads off, gnaw away at self-confidence, throw up bones of contention, devour one another's sense of self-worth. Alternatively, they betray their promise of hearty personal intimacy by freezing one another out with starched etiquette that keeps indigestible truths off the table. Because our material transactions are thus personified, family dinner tables are not merely—like barnyard feeding troughs—a matter of life and death; participation in them—as in larger life—"sets us up" for horrors!

Dinner invitations connote fellowship that is not separate from or parallel to but *in* the eating. Calling us to *supper*, Christ would surely mislead if He did not intend to be really present, embodied person to embodied person, Himself. Christ as host sets the agenda: all conflicts out on the table, immediately! Whatever else there is to say, Christ insists on bringing out the bone of contention between us by showing forth His death. Christ crucified re-presents the problem: human being in this world, radically vulnerable to, inevitably participant in, horrors. Christ crucified re-presents the Stage 1 solution: God not asking more of us than God does of Godself; God-with-us

in the worst that we can suffer, be, or do. Remembering Christ crucified both ways together takes a step toward horror defeat Stage 2. Without comestibles, there is no supper. Christ re-presents Himself by impanation, condescends to serve Himself as food. Family dinner tables are for thrashing out differences. Eating is a hostile act. Inviting us to “take, eat,” Christ offers His bread-Body to be bitten, torn, and crushed by the teeth of the faithful, allowing us to get even by rendering horror for horror to God! Christ re-presents Himself every day, invites us to bring our tears and rage and accusations, to bite and chomp for all we are worth, until the storm clears and we begin to taste and see the Lord’s goodness, until we recognize how love bade us welcome, refused to leave the table, has all the while been strengthening us with His presence and comforting us with His touch.¹

Sacrifice, Cosmic and Eucharistic

The conceptuality of sacrifice well frames our present nonoptimal condition and its remedy. Human being, the material world in which we find ourselves, is the stuff of traffic with the Divine. If horror-ridden human being is the victim, the sacrificers are two. On the one hand, material creation offers up human sacrifice to God: as a *communion sacrifice*, insofar as material creation’s evolving human beings makes it capable of personal intimacy with God; as a *holocaust*, insofar as it not only destroys bodily life, but—in *prima facie* ruining human capacity for personal meaning—it does not retain any meaning-making capacities for itself; as a *best fruits* (on analogy with *first fruits*) offering, insofar as personal animals are the best that material creation has produced. On the other hand, God sacrifices humankind as a *holocaust* on the altar of Divine cosmic purposes—among others, to have a material creation, to enter into intimacy with it, to make matter as Godlike as possible while still being itself.

If God sacrifices humankind by setting us up for horrors, God defeats horrors by sacrificing God’s own self. God has to draw near our dwelling place, enter into the world in which we are *prima facie* cursed, to purify it and make us whole. In priestly and holiness-code texts, entry into the Holy of Holies could prove dangerous to the high priest’s health, because the Holy could “break out” on unrubrical approaches. Likewise, entry into a horror-cursed world proved dangerous to God, because the curse not only threat-

¹ This section summarizes a lengthier argument for impanation in my article “Biting and Chomping Our Salvation! Eucharistic Presence, Radically Understood,” in *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology: Essays in Honor of James E. Loder*, ed. by Dana Wright and John D. Kuentzel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 69–94.

ened, but *prima facie* succeeded in destroying or banishing God from the face of the earth. Just as the Levitical high priest enters the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement, so God enters the most cursed part of our cursed world, by taking on our human nature in both material and personal aspects. Just as the Levitical high priest does not dare to enter the shrine without the blood of purification to absorb and ward off impurities, so God does not enter our world without an *aversion sacrifice*, an offering for the powers of darkness—that is, the horror-producing powers of material creation—to consume, not by fire or literal eating, but by crucifixion.

God also sacrifices Godself—the Word made flesh, a material offering made holy by virtue of hypostatic union—to us. Certainly Emmanuel, God-with-us, counts as a *communion sacrifice*, so also as a *gift sacrifice*, a sweet-smelling savor to honor us by His visitation. Strictly speaking, God cannot make *sin offerings*, because—without obligations to others—God cannot sin no matter what God does. Nevertheless, because radical vulnerability to inevitable (at least collective) participation in horrors is a harm to human being for which God is *responsible*; God's offering of the Word made flesh to us bears analogies to sin offerings. In priestly and holiness-code legislation, *hatta't* sacrifices are offered for unwitting violations of God's prohibitive (and in Numbers, also performative) commands, while graduated *hatta't* offerings can be brought for witting as well as unwitting transgressions. Insofar as horrors and horror participation are not the creative *purpose* at which God aims, these harms can be seen as somehow incidental—which makes God's offering of the Word made flesh as a sacrifice to us, analogous to the *hatta't* sacrifice. Insofar as these consequences are *known*, however, God's sacrifice is more like a graduated *hatta't* or Day of Atonement offering. Priestly legislation allows witting sins to become eligible for sacrificial remedy via repentance, confession, and reparation. Although God cannot literally confess sin, God can do something analogous by acknowledging Divine *responsibility* for creating us in a world like this. Thus, God's offering of the Word made flesh can be compared to the sin offering sacrificed for the people on the Day of Atonement. Insofar as the responsibility for Divine creative policies is laid “on the head” of the Word Made Flesh, the Word Made Flesh can be compared to the scapegoat, “disappeared” by being banished outside the city gates. According to priestly and holiness-code legislation, “high-handed” sins defile not just the outer court and altar, not just the altar of incense, but the Holy of Holies itself, thereby threatening to drive God out of Temple and Land. Similarly, horror participation does not merely do peripheral damage to personal meaning-making systems; it disables the core of that system, stalemating the person's attempts to make positive sense of his or her life.

The blood of bulls and goats, merely human sacrifice, would be ineffectual to purify (restore wholeness to) human horror participants, because no package of merely created goods could defeat horrors. The only remedy is for God to offer Godself: the Word (or some other Divine person) made flesh is the only human sacrifice that will defeat the horror participation of others, of merely human beings within the context of their individual lives.

Israel carried out Day of Atonement rites to protect the nation from Divine wrath. But God comes into our world *in order* to expose Godself to human wrath. Thus, God's offering of the Word made flesh functions as a *propitiation*. In human propitiatory sacrifices to the gods, anger is turned away by offering them something they like to distract their attention from what made them angry. But the Lamb of God is offered not only to calm our anger (by reassuring that God does not ask more of us than God asks of Godself) but also (as above) as a target *for* our anger.

God's offering of the Word made flesh as a sacrifice to us, can also be seen as a *covenant sacrifice*. Contracting with Abram, God commanded him to hack in two a heifer, goat, and ram and to offer a turtle dove and young pigeon (Gen. 15:7–21). In "sealing the deal" with Abraham (Gen. 17:9–14) and later Moses (Ex. 4:24–26), circumcision—a symbolic sacrifice, a shedding of human blood—was required. At Passover, a lamb was to be slain and its blood daubed on the entrance to the house (Ex. 12:1–13). At Calvary, God offers God's own self; in the tradition of the Akedah, the Trinity offers God's only begotten, God's first-born Son, the Word made flesh to be "hacked in two" (His flesh torn by whips, thorns, nails, and spear), to be killed (as *an aversion sacrifice*) by the destroying angel, to become cursed and thereby to have the positive meaning of His human life *prima facie* destroyed. Christ our Passover does protect us from the destroying angel. For Divine horror participation means that our horror participation wrecks the possibility of positive meaning in our lives only *prima facie* and not all things considered.

God's offering of Godself to us is analogous to *the martyr's self-offering* that bears witness to the horrendous human condition and to Divine responsibility for it. Going all the way with us, taking the curse on Godself also testifies to (at least gives evidence of) the truth that God is *for* us after all. God's self-offering is also a *thank offering* to express Divine gratitude to us for living a human life in this horror-ridden world.

Holy Eucharist liturgically condenses the whole of cosmic sacrifice, which makes it many sacrifices at once. First and foremost, in holy Eucharist, God sacrifices Christ to us, again and again. Impanation is the key to how God can *commemorate by repeating* the sacrifice of Calvary, without running afoul of Hebrews' "once for all" (7:27, 9:12, 10:10). Reincarnating—hypostatically

uniting the bread and wine natures to the Divine Word—puts God in a position to offer Christ as a *first fruits offering*, the One in Whose human nature horrors are definitively defeated, Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3. The “breaded” Christ is a *communion sacrifice*, God-with-us, embodied person to embodied person, each and every time; likewise a *gift sacrifice* expressing Divine gratitude to us for leading human lives in a world such as this. In holy Eucharist, God offers the “breaded” Christ as something like an *expiation* by which God acknowledges and accepts responsibility for our plight. Likewise, the “breaded” Christ is both an *aversion* and a *propitiation* sacrifice to absorb and serve as the target we bite and chomp and tear with the teeth, returning horrors for horrors to God. Thus, at every Eucharist, the sacrifice of Calvary is repeated with respect to the “breaded” Christ, for the purpose of working toward horror defeat Stage 2 for the communicants involved. Every Eucharist is thereby a commemoration of Christ’s horror participation in His human nature, which stands as sufficient for horror defeat Stage 1!

Interim Priesthood

Maccabean martyrs reconceptualize torture, death, and dismemberment at gentile hands as their own voluntary sacrifice for sin. Martyr priests bear witness, acknowledge that systemic evil (national apostacy and perverse social structure) is God’s reason for stirring up foreign powers to initiate a pogrom as Divine punishment for collective sin but ask that their voluntary and unblemished self-offerings be accepted as an expiation to bring the punishing consequences of Divine wrath to an end. Martyr priests cannot control the material circumstances of the sacrifice the way Levitical priests were supposed to do. But martyr priests thought to get the personal rubrics right, by loving God with all their hearts, souls, strength, and minds—something that is everywhere and always appropriate (cf. 4 Macc. 5:4–6:30; 8:3–18:24).

Analogously, I suggest, martyr priests after the order of Job offer up human horror participation, bear witness to its rootage in systemic mismatches for which God is ultimately responsible, badger God to do something to defeat horrors, and hound God with questions and objections about what human horror participation really means. Martyr priesthood after the order of Job is liminal and risky because it draws near to God and “sins with the lips.” It is a priesthood that can be exercised on any ash heap or street corner. It finds liturgical focus in the sacrament of the altar, where it is exercised pre-eminently by Christ.

In Eucharistic sacrifice, Christ *qua* human is martyr priest as well as victim. Turning Godward, toward the altar, Christ bears witness to God concerning

the human condition, testifies to the horrors here below. Christ's intercession is partially self-fulfilling, insofar as His own solidarity with us is sufficient for horror defeat Stage 1. Turning toward the people, Christ presents Himself to us and thereby bears witness to horrors and to horror defeat, past, present, and yet to come. On the one hand, Christ presents Himself as God-with-us and therefore God-for-us in the worst that we can suffer, be, or do (i.e., as definitive Stage 1 horror defeat). On the other hand, Christ presents Himself as the first-born of the new creation: a human being whose human center of consciousness has grasped and appropriated positive meaning sufficient for Stage 2 defeat of His own horror participation, a human being whose wounded human body is glorified, its relation to material creation so altered that—according to His human nature—He is no longer radically vulnerable to horrors (that is, horror defeat Stage 3).

Impanation adds a third dimension to Christ's eucharistic priesthood. By hypostatically uniting to bread and wine natures, Christ sets Himself up for a repetition and commemoration of His "once for all" sacrifice on the cross. On the one hand, Christ's self-presentation as food bears witness to God-with-us providing for us in the midst of our continuing vulnerabilities. On the other, Christ's donation of Himself to be bitten, chomped, and chewed exposes Him to our anger and frustration, so great that we would kill and cannibalize, even destroy God. Calvary's ironic reversal repeats itself. Biting and chomping our salvation confers immeasurable dignity, insofar as impanation turns the hostile act of eating into an act of intimacy with God. Thus, Holy Communion "balances off" the indignities of horror participation whether or not any progress on Stage 2 horror defeat is made. At the same time, this very conferral of dignity and the possibility of communicants' winning through to Stage 2 horror defeat, defeat the *prima facie* personal ruin thereby inflicted on Christ by being eaten and drunk, consumed and destroyed.

Christ ordains all who are willing to confront human horrors and Divine ambivalence into the priesthood of bold believers, which imitates and coats-tails on His own. Facing the altar, we bring before God not only bread and wine but also ourselves, our souls and bodies, and the material cosmos God has made. We offer Christ, with the petition, "Just as You made Christ like us in horror participation, so make us and all we offer like Christ in horror defeat." Turning backs to the altar, we present Christ for the world, the One in Whom horror defeat is accomplished: His Stage 1 defeat of all human horrors on Calvary; the "already" of Stage 2 and Stage 3 defeat in His own human nature; His freshly assumed vulnerability in bread and wine natures, really present to midwife Stage 2 horror defeat in us.

Merely human martyr priests also confront the less bold, the timid, and/or the unbelieving with their own present possibility of priesthood. The exercise of martyr priesthood is itself a great blessing, because it makes the priest an active participant in horror defeat Stage 1. Trafficking with God is intimate and risky. But the priest's question-and-disputing intercession itself brings human horror participation right in the middle of her or his own relationship with God. Moreover, faithfully exercised martyr priesthood gains "great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus" (cf. I Tim. 3:13), because over time daily trafficking with God opens them—like Job—to experience Divine Goodness. Morning and evening sacrifice, daily mass, convince martyr priests that God is *for us*, that—whatever the Divine reasons for delay—God is willing and able to thoroughly defeat horrors within the context of each and every horror participant's life.

Some martyr priests become so persuaded that horrors are only *prima facie* ruinous that they offer themselves to others in ways that risk further horror participation. Remember, for example, the religious who took the place of Jews in Nazi crematorium lines; those who joined civil rights demonstrations in the early sixties, placing themselves among the crowds attacked by vicious police dogs; or the Jesuits tortured to death for organizing and empowering poor communities in Central America. Such martyr priests offer themselves as bloody sacrifices to bear witness to the outrage of human horror and to the faithfulness and resourcefulness of God. Their own horror participation in solidarity with others is Stage 1 defeated by virtue of its being an *imitatio Christi*, Who took flesh in order to participate in horrors, to cast God's lot with ours. Their heroic testimony challenges others to scorn horror-producing powers of darkness and to fill up the sufferings of Christ!

Priests Forever

In Genesis 14, Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, comes out to meet Abram, who has just defeated Ched-or-laomer and the kings who were with him. The liturgy is simple. Melchizedek brings out bread and wine. Abram pays tithes on all of the spoils. Melchizedek blesses Abram, the bearer of the promise, and blesses the Promise-Giver, God Most High. Proof-texting Psalm 110:4, the epistle to the Hebrews proclaims Christ priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6; 7 *passim*). The ascended Christ is envisioned as exercising a heavenly priesthood to keep His once-for-all sin offering, the blood of His once-for-all propitiatory sacrifice before God's eyes. Christ is the antitype of Isaac, the pleading of whose sacrifice wins forgiveness for the people of God.

When soteriology is approached from the angle of horrors, Christ still exercises a heavenly priesthood according to His human nature. Christ's human center of thought and choice forever brings before the Godhead the bread and wine of His humanity, scarred by crucifixion, glorified by resurrection. Between ascension and consummation, Christ blesses Abraham's seed, Adam's race, with martyr-priesthood's intercession: "human horrors are not yet utterly defeated; make good on all of them, in each horror participant's life!" Between the "already" and "not yet," Christ blesses God Most High, the One Who has raised Christ Jesus to God's right hand, the One Who will finish what God starts.

Consummate horror defeat in all three stages will complete the consecration of the whole material creation and of its best fruit, humankind. Christ (in His human center of thought and choice) will forever present us to God whole and holy, the trophy of His horror-defeating work. Now priests forever after the order of Melchizedek and under the high priesthood of Christ, we will draw near, present ourselves to God, bearing witness to our struggle and God's victory, to our *prima facie* ruin and God's recreative powers. Best of all, we will present Christ, our prototype, pioneer, and Savior. The missal page will turn from accusation and intercession. Our common sacrifice will be praise and thanksgiving, honor, glory, and blessing forever more!

Aeolian Harp of Renewal: The Private and the Public in Political Engagement

by CHARLES VILLA-VICENCIO

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THE EXISTENTIAL MUTATIONS of cautious nation building, no less than those of unbridled nationalism, are both intriguing *and* frightening. They are intriguing especially for emerging nations that need to build a common future; frightening, within established nations where cultural and political domination so easily degenerates into the arrogance of “the battle won.” New nations, having committed themselves to fight the oppression of the former regime are, of course, similarly never immune to the slippage that ends in the insolence of office and the defense of what they committed themselves to oppose. Yesterday’s revolutionaries are often tomorrow’s oppressors.

The slippage is seen in the rise and fall of ancient empires, in the Jacobins washing away the sins of the world in the blood of the guillotine, in Leninists and Stalinists committed to the cause of alienated humanity and in Mao Zedong’s long march. More recently it is seen operating at different levels of intensity in Third World revolutions in Latin America and Africa, in the apartheid dream of the white Afrikaner, and in the engagement of the American-led “coalition of the willing” against terrorism, Islamic extremism, and the axis of evil.

The question is whether and how the commitment to freedom embedded in the grandiloquent cries of nations—strident, defiant, sentimental, sober, and solemn—driven by passion, ethical vision, religion, and/or secular vision can counter the temptations of power, often laced with the capacity to self-destruct.

Suffice it to say, future freedoms need to be secured in the present. Tomorrow’s temptations need to be countered today. Abraham Kuyper, in his celebrated *Lectures on Calvinism*, sees this as the ongoing obligation of any nation. He articulates this in the metaphor of the aeolian harp that, he tells us, is induced to music by the rustle of the wind. “Until the wind blew, the harp remained silent, while, again, even though the wind arose, if the harp did not lie in readiness, a rustling of the breeze might be heard, but not a single note of ethereal music delighted the ear.”¹ He argues effectively that the structures and systems of organized society need to be ready, fine-tuned

¹ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), 199.

and in-waiting to appropriate and respond to the winds of change and opportunity that history provides.

I argue in what follows that western notions of liberalism and multiculturalism seldom meet the needs of nations in transition that have to deal with deeply entrenched cultural, ethnic, racial, and other divisions. I argue further that a Kuyperian appreciation of the sensitivities around these issues, coupled with a traditional African notion of communal belonging, epitomized in a sense of *ubuntu* (a concept to which I return), deserves to be revisited both philosophically and at the level of practical politics. Although worlds and years apart, both affirm a communal rather than a liberal individualistic approach to nation building. Both seek to steer a middle path between “modernist” notions of rationalism and “traditional” belonging. As such, both affirm a reformist approach to political transition rather than a revolutionary approach, questioning the realistic possibility of zero-hour options for political renewal.

Kuyper’s understanding of effective political living has of course been employed, used, abused, and recreated by a range of scholars and students. I am suggesting, perhaps ironically, that his notion of *sphere sovereignty* (so horribly abused by apartheid ideologues) could have served as a catalyst for a more tolerant South Africa. It could have provided a basis for socio-ethnic inclusion, rather than being used to provide a philosophical and theological justification for apartheid.

It could, of course, be argued that this *redirecting* of an ethnic or tribal misuse of Kuyperian thought by white Afrikaner ideologues is both dangerous and (yet again) a false use of Kuyper. Max Stackhouse correctly indicates that spheres in Kuyper are “specialised human activities—politics, church, science, art etc., *not* ethnic, tribal or national groups—except for family.”² This said, the traditional Afrikaner sense of *Volk*, grounded in blood, belonging, and fatherland (plus the African concept of extended family), employs an ethnic and cultural interpretation of Kuyper. The question is whether a “new” interpretation of Kuyper, even if false, is legitimate if it helps to heal a nation, which was, of course, Kuyper’s primary objective. More important is the question whether it does or can contribute to enabling a nation of such diversity as South Africa to learn to live together.

I suggest that inclusive, democratic pluralism that allows for a self-conscious sense of cultural and ethnic belonging is perhaps the only available political antidote to counter the elevation of a particular cultural and ethnic group, sometimes under guise of an inclusive political vision, from being elevated to the level of the universal. In theological terms, it has to do with

² In personal correspondence, April 6, 2005.

ensuring that the politics of the dominant class is never allowed to be seen as the politics of God. Democratic politics need to be probing and competitive. It is often conflictive. At best it is also adaptive, flexible, dialogical, and conciliatory. This, suggests Bernard Crick, is the way free societies remain free. "If we act so unnaturally as to try to merge all our individuality and all our corporate differences in one common enterprise, then that enterprise is inevitably crazy and destructive—like the chase of the white whale Moby Dick, heroic, but inhuman and fatal."³ Words worth pondering! Politics is necessarily a "messy, mundane, inconclusive, tangled business, far removed from the passion of certainty and the fascination for world-shaking quest that drives the totalitarian [impulse]."⁴ It is at its best when poets, satirists, alienated people, and ordinary citizens stare down the steely eye of the single-minded and overconfident politician, intellectual, revolutionary, or priest. The guardians of democracy, no less than leaders of other kinds, themselves need to be guarded.

Embedded in a South African context, for it is here that I live and have my being, I relate the South African quest for nation building to the concerns of people elsewhere in our world who in their own way seek to live together in societies that are deeply divided by different social and material realities.

To this end I discuss:

- The theologized nationalism of the South African apartheid regime, grounded as it was in a brand of neo-Calvinism and a distorted reading of Kuyper.
- The reality of ethnic and material divisions.
- The role of the "public" and the "private" as a safeguard and incentive in the nation-building project.
- Options for cultural diversity and political pluralism.

South Africa's Theologized Nationalism

This is neither the time nor the place to engage the complexities of South African political history.⁵ It is also not necessary to revisit the particular

³ Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), 54.

⁴ Ibid., 55.

⁵ Rodney Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History* (London: Macmillan, 2000); Basil Davidson, *African Civilization Revisited: From Antiquity to Modern Times* (Trenton: African World Press, 1991); UNESCO International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa, *General History of Africa*, vols. 1–8 (UNESCO, Cape Town: New Africa Books, 2003); *Africa Since 1990*, Y. N. Seleti, ed., (Cape Town: New Africa Books, 2004).

history of Afrikaner nationalism within which apartheid is ideologically embedded.⁶ I will not address the debate between materialists and idealists on whether Afrikaner nationalism is grounded in economic privilege or the more romantic sense of divine mission that simply resulted in privilege and prosperity. This is an old and enduring debate, with tentacles that reach into the politics of New England, contemporary prosperity cults of Christianity, the emerging elite of new nations, and the tried and tested dictums of the established elite who insist they worked damn hard for what they have and that God has blessed them. It is enough for present purposes to identify only the broadest philosophical parameters of white nationalism that resulted in the near conflagration of the country, the eventual settlement between essentially white Boer and black African in the 1990s, and the birth of democracy that followed.

The white foothold on South African shores in the sixteenth century was intended to be no more than a halfway house for sailing ships on the long sea voyage to India. In time it evolved into a settlement, surviving as it did under the harsh dictates of the VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) or Dutch East India Company. "In its great shadow, nothing could grow. The remarkable thing is not that the Afrikaner took so long to emerge, but that they emerged at all," writes Afrikaner author and historian W. A. de Klerk.⁷ There was little to bind together this remote embryonic community, other than a simple down-to-earth brand of Calvinism rooted in the 1618 Synod of Dort restrictions. Bolstered by the arrival of the French Huguenots in 1688 and blended into the harsh realities of frontier life, an austere yet simple brand of Christianity underpinned by a fundamentalist reading of the Bible produced a worldview that made sense to a people who in time would come to regard themselves as having been deliberately placed by God on the southern tip of Africa for a purpose.⁸

The underlying similarities between the evolving Calvinism on Africa's southern tip and that of the Calvinists of New England in the eighteenth century are there to be seen, as are the contrasts.⁹ While the Calvinists of New England were passing through their religious Great Awakening and

⁶ T. Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Herman Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003).

⁷ W. A. de Klerk, *The Puritans in Africa* (London: Rex Collins, 1975), 8.

⁸ Scholars of Afrikaner nationalism suggest it was not until the late nineteenth century that this brand of theologized nationalism emerged, at which point earlier events were reinterpreted from this perspective.

⁹ Interesting in this regard is Kuyper's decision to turn away from his earlier expectations for Calvinism in South Africa, believing that the future of Calvinism lay not in Africa but in America. See George Harinck, "Abraham Kuyper, South Africa and Apartheid," <http://www.ptsem.edu/grow/kuyper/apartheid.htm> (accessed August 22, 2005).

coming to grips with a secular bill of human rights, the Dutch and French colonists of the Cape were being increasingly isolated from the dawning of the European enlightenment. At the same time, with few exceptions, they isolated themselves from the Khoisan and other African communities, an isolation that led to confrontation, exploitation, and war with the indigenous people of the area. Then, as time passed, the cry of freedom and independence slowly and hesitantly began to be heard among the settlers, a cry grounded in racial separation that would shape the future of a nation waiting to be born.

The tale is a heroic and a tragic one. It needs to be understood not as an isolated phenomenon of a peculiar people doomed to destroy themselves through self-assertion and the humiliation of others. It is better understood as part of a more general picture of a threatened people, driven by religion, more especially a Puritan faith, who sought both power and divine approval. The outcome was an obsession with being a chosen instrument in the hands of a divine Architect. As the emphasis on the instrument increased, so the place of divine transcendence became subtly subjected to a popular religio-political myth of a chosen people. The *vox dei* was being reduced to the *vox populi*. Of course, there was resistance: Andrew Murray, an important influence in the Dutch Reformed Church and pietist critic of growing nationalist trends within the church at the time, warned of "the danger that the voice of blood, the voice of passion, of partisanship, of group interest will overpower the voice of the Gospel."¹⁰ Such voices were, however, few and far between within the ecclesial citadel.

This sense of divine mission therefore took time to come to full expression. There was much to happen in the interim. The Anglo-Boer War—long, bitter and grueling—would eventually be won by the British. Afrikaners were split between those who sought conciliation with the British and those who emphasized the priority of *die eie*—the me and mine—an enhanced Afrikaner consciousness built around language, identity, land, and religion. Within this blending of nationalist politics and a brand of neo-Calvinist thought, the wisdom of Kuyper's "sovereignty of spheres" was turned on its head and thrown into the mix.

Kuyper wrote, in his Princeton lectures, of the need for the state to protect itself against disintegration by acknowledging and respecting the sovereignty of a range of individual and social spheres within society.¹¹ For good order to

¹⁰ A. M. Hugo, "Christelik-Nasionaal in Suid Afrika," *Pro Veritate* (May 1968).

¹¹ Kuyper, *Lectures*, 85. Kuyper's teaching in this regard was in relation to a pertinent problem in the Netherlands at the time, namely, the struggle for the right of the family to have their children taught religious knowledge in school and academic freedom in universities.

prevail, the state, he insisted, needed to counter anarchy, while never allowing itself to become despotic or oppressive. To this end Kuyper stressed the place of individual and social spheres as a structure of common grace directly under God, "with nothing above them except God."¹² In modern parlance they exist as a "check and balance" against the dominance of the state. "The state," he insists, "may never become an octopus, which stifles the whole of life." He then switches the metaphor, telling us that government "must occupy its own place, on its own root, among all the other trees of the forest."¹³ And yet, more than a block against totalitarianism, Kuyper grounds the sovereignty of spheres in a sense of diversity that he attributes to the order of creation, seeing God as the author of the unity and diversity of humanity.¹⁴ The implication is that no one race, culture, creed, or *völk* could claim superiority over another. He stressed the need for the state to recognize and respect such "innate laws of life" as a "divine mandate" within each of these spheres, accepting that it cannot control or deliver on all the needs of society. Peter Berger saw this, of course, in arguing that the "mega structures" of society cannot provide the inspiration for all its citizens without the assistance and engagement of other collectives.¹⁵

Subjected to neither the wisdom nor the folly of modern thought, Kuyper anticipated the affirmation of individual and communal rights and plural democracy central to political debate, as we know it today. He sought to protect the rights of individuals and communities, recognizing the affirmation and struggle for such rights as having been a God-given right and duty.¹⁶ He saw the family unit, business, science and the arts, plus what James Luther Adams later popularized as "voluntary associations," as given by God to counter and arrest the capacity of the state to dominate.¹⁷

What does all this, plausible and important as it is, have to do with Afrikaner nationalism and the origins of apartheid? Zealous Afrikaner nationalists were by the beginning of the nineteenth century resisting not their cousins in the VOC but British colonialists and those Afrikaners who were seen to be collaborators with the imperialists. They seized on the notion of the innate law of God within the Afrikaner *völk* not as a corrective to a state dominance that marginalized the right to Afrikaner culture, language, and

¹² Ibid., 116.

¹³ Ibid., 96–97.

¹⁴ James W. Skillen and Rockne M. McCarthy, eds., *Political Order and the Plural Structure of Society* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 397ff.

¹⁵ Peter Berger, *Facing Up To Modernity: Excursions in Society, Politics and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 140.

¹⁶ Kuyper, *Lectures*, 98.

¹⁷ D. B. Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966).

belief but as a means to power itself. For them the state needed to promote the God-given inner spirit of the *volk*, protecting it against the threat of impulses grounded in other cultures, people, and would-be power blocs. And there is a sense in which Kuyper's understanding of the nation lent itself to nationalist ends. "God created nations. They exist for him," he wrote. "They are his own."¹⁸ It was a simple step to relate this to what Afrikaner intellectuals, like H. G. Stoker, referred to as the "organic, primary structure and goal that gives vitality and energy to such basic units as family and nation."¹⁹ Afrikaner ideologues argued that the *volk* was an instrument of God through which the individual realized his or her God-given potential as a person—a centripetal point to be nurtured and promoted through the affirmation of what is one's own—in poetry, song, prayer, and other forms of culture. This was a short step to apartheid ideology that separated the races to ensure the promotion of a particular identity.

The other side of Kuyper's understanding of the nation as God-given is, of course, that the nation is located under the sovereignty of God, existing "for his glory . . . so that divine wisdom might shine forth through them,"²⁰ a notion that was soon played down. Nico Diederichs (later to become a South African State President) would return from study abroad to become professor of philosophy at Grey University College of the Free State and further develop the link between individual and national identity. "Without the elevating, ennobling and enriching influence of this highest inclusive unity which we call a nation," he wrote, "mankind cannot reach the fullest heights of his human existence. . . . Only through the nation as the most total, most inclusive human community can man realize himself to the full. The nation is the fulfillment of the individual life."²¹ "To work for the realisation of the national calling is to work for the realisation of God's plan. Service to the nation is part of my service to God."²² Drawing on immanentist philosophy and neo-Fichtean forms of idealism, Diederichs and several others came close to reducing the transcendence of God to the *volksgeist* of the Afrikaner people.²³ Stoker, who with many advocates of the Afrikaner Language Movement, spoke with equal enthusiasm of the importance of family and nation within church and state, cautioned Diederichs against the danger of deification of the nation, but the die was cast. Without surrendering to the philo-

¹⁸ Kuyper, *Lectures*, 81.

¹⁹ H. G. Stoker, *Die Stryd om die Ordes* (Potchefstroom: Calvyn Jubileum Boekfonds, 1941), 148.

²⁰ Kuyper, *Lectures*, 81.

²¹ N. Diederichs, *Nasionalisme as Lewensbeskouing en sy Verhouding tot Internasionalisme* (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, 1935), 19. See Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 156–64.

²² Diederichs, *Nasionalisme*, 63.

²³ Moodie, *Rise of Afrikanerdom*, 270.

sophical musings of Diederichs and others, theologians and biblical scholars developed an elaborate biblical justification of the separation of races and apartheid.²⁴ The Dutch Reformed Church was Afrikaner nationalism at prayer. Politicians, preachers, teachers, purveyors of popular culture, and a gullible and self-serving white electorate did the rest. From a theological perspective, it was neo-Calvinism and neo-Kuyperianism that won the day.

All this is by way of context. The result was a form of unbridled theologized nationalism that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, and others would, in time, declare to be a heresy. It was a complex and relatively easy slide from religious piety to the national arrogance of a battle won in 1948, with the National Party coming to power. The story, I have already suggested, is not a unique one. In one form or another, it is the story of a subtle slippage from the rise to the fall of nations seen in ancient and in modern times. It is the story of a universal tendency among nations to declare that which is not part of us to be alien and dangerous, whether un-Aryan, un-South African, un-American, or un-anything else. Wole Soyinka recently spoke of a "near unbroken continuum of history" between politics and religion, which he sees as two sides of the same coin. He suggests that while sanctimoniousness characterizes the political, sacrosanctity is the contribution of religion to the social engineering that threatens the option to be free.²⁵

What is almost unique is the relatively peaceful advent of South African democracy in 1994, marking the beginning of a liberating process out of the iron cage of white self-deceit that characterized apartheid. Although incredible progress has been made in this regard, there is still a great deal of work to be done in overcoming the racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic divisions that continue to challenge the nation. It is here that the focus of this presentation is located.

Ethnic and Material Divisions

The South African revolution is a celebration of national unity, while deliberately seeking to provide space for minority groups to affirm their particular identities. There is an overt constitutional commitment to ensure that the center holds. The question is *how* in practice, not least in the wake of years of imposed legal separation of the races, South Africans can learn to live together in unity and diversity.

²⁴ *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture* (Cape Town: Dutch Reformed Church Publishers, 1975).

²⁵ Wole Soyinka, *Climate of Fear* (London: Profile Books, 2004), 57.

The overwhelming majority of notable conflicts around the world today are between communities within nation states rather than between nation states. Most of these conflicts are at least partially rooted in the failure of ethnic, cultural, and religious communities to coexist peacefully. It is, at the same time, important to recognize that ethnic, cultural, and religious conflicts are almost invariably intertwined with some form of material deprivation and/or political exclusion. It is essentially when individuals and groups experience a sense of exclusion from the body politic and its material benefits that they draw on identity concerns to drive and legitimate their political and material agendas.

The intriguing question is that if the alienation is at least partially if not essentially material, why do dissident groups resort to cultural and religious language, rituals, and practice to give expression to their alienation? It probably has something to do with the depth of the marginalization and alienation often experienced by excluded groups. Although alienation is invariably grounded in and driven by political and economic decision making, it reaches deep into the realm of the spiritual and metaphysical. Not dropping from heaven, it is forged in history—impacting on body and limb—while posing questions that reach into the depths of the meaning of life itself. It is a cry *from* and *to* the very ground of one's being. It is an appeal to the most essential sources of life, the ancestors, the spirits, the soil, the tradition, and the gods.

Examples abound, not least on the African continent: the source of Mayi Mayi deprivation and exclusion in the Kivu provinces in the eastern part of the Congo is essentially socioeconomic, and yet they draw on cultural and traditional religious forces, magic, ancestor veneration, and the traditional forms of spirituality to give expression to their exclusion. The Casamance people, alienated by the dominant Senegalese culture and social economy, draw on Diola culture to justify their struggle for political and economic independence. Material essentials such as land, rice, and rain are spoken of almost with the same breath as ancestors, spirits, and the Supreme Being. The origins of the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda, in turn, emerged out of the Holy Spirit Movement under Alice Lakwena, grounded in political and economic exclusion.

To such African examples, there needs to be added the religious and ethnic identity concerns of the Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland; Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in the Balkans; the Kurds in Iran and Iraq; the Sikhs in Northern India and Kashmir and Tamils in Sri Lanka; the Basques in Spain; Papua and Aceh in Indonesia; and the concerns of Tibetans. Take, too, the sense of exclusion of Pakistanis in Britain, Hispanics in the United States, aborigines in Australia, Maoris in New Zealand, the Inuit in Canada, the

French in Quebec, and the Khoi-San, plus some Afrikaner groups, in South Africa.

International instruments on group and minority rights, beginning essentially with the recommendation of the UN subcommittee on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minority Rights in 1954, signal an increasing awareness by the international community that groups excluded from the dominant culture of their environment—on the basis of ethnicity, religion, and language—constitute a threat to national and regional stability. This underlines the need to include in the nation-building process all those who have the capacity to undermine peacemaking and democracy, without allowing them to jeopardize the emergence of an equitable and just new order.

Differently stated, there is an increasing global awareness that nations—not least nations in transition from oppressive rule and sustained violence—that fail to address the threat represented by groups excluded from the nation-building process do so at their own peril. The necessary balance required in this regard is a delicate one. To delay the creation of a shared and inclusive culture is to allow dissident groups to perpetuate the old order. To proceed too quickly is, on the other hand, to promote resentment and potential destabilization. The question of *how* to build an inclusive state in situations of deep historical, cultural, religious, and material divisions gives expression to a political challenge to emerging democracies that the academia, politicians, and all sound-minded citizens would do well to heed. It concerns what seems to be a deep and abiding ontological or “metareality” that underlies the often asocial and politically destructive behavior of dissident groups. It takes more than the strong arm of the law, as important as this may be, to control or include those who feel their identity threatened by an emerging new order.

The difficulties involved at least partially explain the global shift in recent years to the reemergence of the nation state, witnessed, for example, in the disintegration of the Soviet bloc. Martin Marty points to an increasing preoccupation with the particular, with the own. He writes of a mental shift from the “global village” and the “spaceship earth,” “homogenisation” and “planetisation” to “particularism” and “difference,” if not “tribal warfare.”²⁶ So, South Africa, will the center hold? Does the state have the capacity and the will to recognize and respond to the hopes and the fears of particular groups within the nation—black African, colored, people of Asian extraction, and white people? What is the role of civil society, communities, and family

²⁶ Martin E. Marty, “From the Centripetal to the Centrifugal in Culture and Religion,” *Theology Today* (1994): 1.

groups in this regard? Do such *social spheres* have a contribution to make that the state is unable to provide? Who brings the social tissue found in culture and community values to the larger national debate?

The problems involved were interestingly anticipated at a crucial turning point in resistance politics that preceded the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and other liberal movements in 1960. The 1955 Freedom Charter states: "There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools of all national groups and races; all national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride; all people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs."²⁷ For all our limitations in getting the formula exactly right, people around the world hold this South African sense of inclusivity in esteem. At home, on the other hand, we continue to wrestle with the difficulties of learning to live together, and we wonder whether our many cultures can ever be included in the one nation comprising many cultures upheld by President Mandela in his 1994 inaugural presidential address.

Ten years later there is an indication that although disintegration is unlikely, this oneness is being challenged by a growing sense of particularism. Khoi-San origins are celebrated, there is a growing pride among those who trace their identity to the arrival of sixteenth-century slaves, Afrikaners claim their place as a tribe of Africa, South African Indians affirm their cultural origins, and Muslim women are increasingly being seen in public in black veils. Only the South African English, speaking generally, still seem to struggle to define their ancestral origins both beyond language and global dominance of some kind. The black African majority is no more homogeneous than any other group, and yet, perhaps because of a new sense of dominance, they are largely indifferent to the searches and squabbles that constitute the identity struggles of minority groups, although some black intellectuals enjoy dipping their oars into such debates, often to the annoyance of those whites who prefer not to be questioned on such matters.

The question is how to create space in society to allow people to affirm, even reinforce, their particular identity while liberating themselves and their tradition from the kind of chauvinistic self-assertion that limits or closes down on the space and opportunity for others to be themselves. This is where Kuyper's sense of the importance of social spheres needs to be reassessed. Difference-blind models of coexistence that suggest we opt for what is common while playing down what makes us different simply does not work

²⁷ African National Congress (ANC), "The Freedom Charter," Reprinted at www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html (accessed August 22, 2005).

in a society rooted in the kind of separation that is still part of the South African consciousness and indeed that of the United States.²⁸ Perhaps it is those who are most rooted and secure in their own identity who do not assume that the me and mine (*die eie*) are more important than you and yours (*die ander*)—witnessed in South Africa in Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and white Afrikaners such as Bram Fischer, Beyers Naudé, and others—who provide a sense of direction in the quest to enable people of different identities to live in harmony and peace.

The Public and the Private

Hannah Arendt develops an important argument regarding the relationship between the private and the public, contending that the former provides a space for reflection in which to prepare for action in public.²⁹ It is within the private that the nature and cost of public involvement needs to be weighed and considered, recognizing that family and community are core socializing units that inspire and create the moral and ethical values in society. It is here that the individual needs to discover the integrity of his or her essential self. And, from Arendt's perspective, if one's most private spiritual, ethical, and cultural values do not have public beneficence they become the very source of greed, hypocrisy, and social conflict.

For these values to mature and have public beneficence, they need space in which to grow and develop. Hence is demonstrated the importance of Kuyper's understanding of the need to protect and nurture social spheres, James Luther Adams's emphasis on voluntary associations, and the importance of what Robert Bellah and others call "rich associational diversity"³⁰ as vital to the pursuit of a healthy society. Each group needs to be challenged by other groups, whereas individually and collectively they need to challenge and renew the nation.

The basis of a vibrant and sustainable democracy is engagement between different worldviews, values, and traditions as a basis for the evolution of an integrated national debate that is reduced to the kind of monolithic conformity that excludes those who differ. For this to happen there needs to be space for conflict to happen. Community, *ubuntu*, and belonging do not exclude conflict. They seek ways to transcend exclusion and enduring hostility. They recognize that there comes a time for the "washing of the spears," without suggesting that there is room for everyone (racists, anarchists, and

²⁸ Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 40.

²⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

³⁰ Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 239, 281–82.

thugs included) in a community committed to inclusion and peace. Values and rules are required for any community to survive. Viable values and rules need at the same time to be negotiated and inclusive. For this to happen there needs to be noisy debate and harsh words. There needs to be room for anger to ensure that the wind blowing through the Aeolian harp provides music that is not too soft to facilitate the stormy reality of nation building.

The balance between the one and the many, between unity and diversity, is a crucial ingredient of the nation-building process, not least in countries in transition from autocratic rule to the beginning of democracy, such as South Africa, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Yet, there is a sense in which countries are *always* in transition. The demographic shift in the United States, its changing cultural ethos, and the shift in power relations make the process of learning to live with difference as pertinent to your country as it is to mine.

We speak of cultural wars, the clash of civilizations, and religious-inspired separatism. The need is not for competing ideologies, religions, and world-views as a basis for scoring points or persuading *ourselves* that ours is best (because we seldom persuade anyone else). That is not how healthy conversations, or for that matter conversions, happen. Healthy living is rather about bringing different perceptions, values, and arguments to national endeavor as a basis for learning to live together in peace. We need, in the words of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, each to drink from our own wells. And yet, as we drink deep, we sense the common ingredients of the water of different wells, wondering to what extent they may just tap into at least parts of the same subterranean river. Back to Hannah Arendt. She reminds us that an exclusivist religion or ideology "shields us . . . from the impact of reality . . . ruining the mind's capacity for judgment and for learning."³¹ Martin Prozesky, writing at the time of the South African transition on the need to create a new, inclusive national ethos, argues that it is "the right of every woman, man and child on this planet to be as fully fulfilled a creator of spiritual means of production as all others."³² The question needs to, at least, be entertained as to whether the most alienated members of any society have the opportunity to be heard and to share in the creation of the national ethos.

Differently put, the structures and systems of organized society need to be such that the voice of all interest groups that comprise that nation can be heard and responded to in an appropriate manner. Where this fails to

³¹ Hannah Arendt, *Crisis of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Johanovich, 1972), 40.

³² Martin Prozesky, "Religious Liberty in a Secular State: Some Challenges for South Africa." Quoted in Charles Villa-Vicencio, *The Spirit of Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), xiv.

happen, the music of the aeolian harp cannot be heard. The noise of clashing symbols, or alternatively the morose silence of indifference, augur well for no society.

Diversity and Pluralism

Contemporary intellectual debate on diversity, pluralism, and participation has many contours. It is shaped, *inter alia*, by a sense of common justice, abstracted from diverse participatory traditions. Rawls suggests that we best cultivate political civility by voluntarily extricating ourselves from the pull of particularism, as a basis for realizing a consensual universality within which everyone feels at home.³³ Michael Novak, in turn, speaks of the public square as an “empty shrine,” which he optimistically defines as a “reverential emptiness at the heart of pluralism.”³⁴ For him, it is a place of transcendence within which each participant is invited to reach beyond his or her own tribal identity in pursuit of the common good. He, at the same time, recognizes that the individual and group can do so only from “within lived social worlds,” arguing that it is impossible to leave one’s culture and identity outside the square, to climb out of one’s own skin.³⁵ This dialectic acknowledged, I suggest that deep encounter with the other enables one to realize that one’s being is completed only through engaging the other, an understanding that resides at the heart of the African notion of *ubuntu*. In contemporary South Africa *ubuntu* is a trendy, romantic notion often appropriated and exploited by whites and promoted by advertising agencies. It is also a notion that gives poetic expression that is part of an African worldview that recognizes the importance of belonging, of respect for community values, and the need to find one’s humanity in the humanity of others. Whatever its origins—and without suggesting that it is commonly practiced by Africans, anymore than that the essential value of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam are practiced by most who claim to affirm them—*ubuntu* provides a vision and incentive that challenges the presuppositions of western individualism that nations would do well to consider.

The question is *how* to give practical effect to these aspirations. It has partly to do with reconsidering the link between faith, community, and nation without reducing the latter to the former. It is about encouraging different cultural visions, memories, cultures, religions, myths, and languages of dif-

³³ John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1985): 25; also “The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus,” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 9–10, 18–19.

³⁴ Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 68.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

ferent groups and tribes to be affirmed, celebrated, and promoted through debate and participation. As implied earlier, this can perhaps best be facilitated by associations ranging from academic institutions, faith communities, cultural foundations, historical associations, and arts, music, and language festivals, as a basis for encouraging individuals and groups to explore the meaning of their own cultures, to push the boundaries of their cultures, to engage the culture of others and, importantly, to explore the relationship between cultures both where these clash and where they complement.

I emphasize three things: *one*, identity is more than skin deep. While taught, evolving and hybridized, it is also metaphysical and spiritual. Identity and cultural concerns of individuals and minorities are unlikely to wither away easily. They can be a source of social instability, not least to a young democracy. It is therefore wise statecraft to draw those with such concerns into the nation-building project. *Two*, for this to happen, space needs to be created for cultural associations to drive, facilitate, and enable that participation. *Three*, there is a strong material basis to the identity debate. Where body and limb, material possessions, and survival are under threat, cultural exclusivity is often resorted to as a vehicle to justify and drive conflict in the name of religion, language, culture, and memory. We cannot afford to ignore the economic challenge we face. It has the capacity to destroy the gains we have made since 1994. To fail to deal with the material means that the cultural and ethnic challenges we face will intensify in the years ahead. Recognizing the dangers of exclusion, the South African Constitution, like the Freedom Charter before it, interestingly affirms and celebrates diversity as a necessary ingredient of South African identity, entrenching eleven official languages. The representation of minority parties in the National Assembly is based on a formula of as little as a quarter of one percent of the national vote, all this to ensure participation in the nation-building project. The bigger challenge is, of course, to give expression to this commitment to inclusivity in everyday life, where exclusion continues to be experienced.

An inclusive democracy incorporates both invitation and challenge. These are the flip sides of the same coin, which involve the affirmation of the inherent link between reconciliation, social inclusion, and economic development. Reflecting on these challenges, Njabulo Ndebele powerfully and yet simply suggests that reconciliation and inclusion have not so much to do with present realities as with "who we can become."³⁶ This reminds us that for reconciliation to survive and cultural tolerance to prosper, the material and the subjective must be promoted as two sides of the same coin.

³⁶ In his address at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation's Reconciliation Award Ceremony, March 8, 2000.

Can Kuyper, understood within the broad ambit of *ubuntu* and the need for communal living, provide a balance between unity and diversity where liberalism and multiculturalism have failed?

Liberalism

In brief, liberalism suggests essentially that where rights are in place, culture is less of an issue. It implies a public square where issues of coexistence can be dealt with in a quiet and rational manner that plays down such contentious issues as race, gender, and class, those very things that some would argue constitute the essential ingredients of what it means to be human. If this is the case, the playing down of these essentials undermines the capacity of constituent groups to participate in the nation-building project, especially those who are without the economic, intellectual, and language resources of the dominant group.

What some see as the culture-free, simple efficiency of the liberal state is, of course, often thick with cultural overtones. It is *ob so easy* to persuade ourselves that liberal democracy creates room for all. If only to avoid self-illusion, we need to listen most attentively to those who occupy the margins of the public square. They tend to see the fault lines of the inclusive square more clearly than do those most comfortably at home within it. It takes more than the tolerance of an African shirt, a taub, a scarf, or a yarmulke to transcend cultural domination. Max Weber reminded us that culture is more than a light cloak that we can don or throw off our shoulders at will.³⁷

Surface-level transformation and inclusion raise the question as to whether multiculturalism can be a credible alternative to culturally exclusive models of liberalism.

Multiculturalism

Apartheid was, of course, built on multicultural difference and the promotion of group identity, as a pretext to dominate. Boerestaat (Afrikaner homeland) politics and Zulu nationalism, in turn, and in a different way, continue to affirm the right to be different. Building a society in which different cultures and ethnic groups live side by side, rather than exploring the possibilities of engaging one another, clearly has its own set of problems.

A limitation of multiculturalism is its failure to address the ambiguities of identity. Particular groups—whether Afrikaners, Khoi-San, or Griqua in South Africa or Hispanics, Polish-Americans, or, for that matter, women in

³⁷ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribners, 1976).

the United States—are not homogeneous. They include the wealthy, the poor, intellectuals, men, women, workers, and management. These different groupings—whether workers, management, or youth—often have more in common across cultural and ethnic lines than they have with others within their own particular group, calling into question any simple sense of cultural bonding.

Gloria Anzaldua, in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, tells the intriguing story of a Chicano lesbian woman who struggles for survival on the edge of an American city. "The new *mestiza*," she writes, "copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a dualistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain the contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else."³⁸ She incorporates here several identities. There is nothing static, nothing fixed. Is she an exception, a caricature, or an anticipation of the kind of cultural mix your nation, my nation, is likely to face?

A sense of multiculturalism that allows us merely to live side by side with toleration while failing to address this integration, change, and evolution of identities evades the real challenge of living together. It is a stereotype. At worst, it can be racist. It seeks to counter liberalism's unity *over* diversity, with diversity *in* unity that does little to explore trajectories beyond separate identities. At worst, it can be little more than a ruse for living with subtle but entrenched separation, or what was once defined as "separate but equal."

Cultural Openness

Can the community identity focus of Kuyper, augmented with a shot of African *ubuntuism*, contribute more than liberalism and multiculturalism to an inclusive nation-building process? Does Kuyper deserve another chance?³⁹ Suitably contextualized in a culturally diverse world, the answer is probably "yes." The idea of cultural openness and inclusivity involves the exploration of the future rather than the protection of the past or entrenchment of the present. It considers what tomorrow may hold, rather than trying to prevent the inevitable. In so doing, it needs to address the relationship between the private and the public, recognizing that identity is always identity-in-the-making. It must be aware that new, complex identities are today as dominant in the global village as are tribal and ethnic separation.

³⁸ Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinster/Aunt Lute, 1987), 79.

³⁹ Richard Mouw, "Some Reflections on Sphere Sovereignty," in *Religion, Pluralism and Public Life: Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for the Twenty-First Century*, Luis E. Lugo, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 88.

Debate in South Africa has, at times, become heated as to who is entitled to be regarded as an African. Are whites who have been part of the soil for over three hundred years African? What do we make of the white tribe of Africa, the Afrikaner? Consider the words of South African novelist Zakes Mda:

African identity is a very novel phenomenon. It is, in fact, an identity-in-the-making. Until a hundred years ago the inhabitants of the continent did not generally refer to themselves as Africans—either as a racial or a continental identity. They recognised and celebrated various identities that were based on ethnicity, clan, family, gender and class—and later on nation and religion.

In South Africa the first people to collectively call themselves Africans were the descendants of the Dutch and French Huguenot settlers who were known as the Boers because of their agrarian culture.

Although most Africans are black, not all black people are Africans. Most importantly, not all Africans are black.⁴⁰

An Unconcluding Cultural Conclusion

Suffice it to say that the issues of identity and self-determination that underpinned the abortive and destructive policy of apartheid continue to challenge the South African nation. The jury is still out on whether the national experiment in learning to live together will provide a basis for peaceful coexistence.

What is clear is that the contextual relationship between the pieces that make up the whole—cultural, tribal, religious and economic interest groups—need to be allowed to impact on and shape the whole. To push even the smallest minority out of the equation is to invite discontent. The irony is that Kuyper, his specific intent aside and despite the prejudices that characterized his time, opened a debate that, if contextually developed and grounded in the fertile soil of Africa rather than the narrow exclusivism of Eurocentric neo-Calvinists, could have opened the way for a level of tolerance that we are only beginning to explore more than a century later.

Alternatively, do ethnic, tribal, and national foci of one kind or another, sooner or later, inevitably seek to dominate rather than share? If so, this interpretation of Kuyper is indeed, as Stackhouse suggests, not only wrong but also dangerous. But then, danger is inherent to the politics of diversity. Difference is not abating. It is here to stay, probably to grow. We need to explore ways of engaging difference in different and creative ways.

⁴⁰ Conference held December 4–5, 2001, www.ijr.org.za (accessed August 22, 2005).

I conclude with seven one-sentence observations on culture: *one*, culture comes from the Latin word *cultura*, a word for farming that involves the complex process in which that which is given by nature is being intentionally interfered with in an attempt to create a better product. *Two*, we are all born into our culture; it is there waiting for us. *Three*, everyone's culture is in flux; we share in the changing process. *Four*, cultural groups are never homogeneous; we all differ from our closest kinsfolk. *Five*, no one finds it particularly easy to change culture; most of us are culturally a bit reactionary. *Six*, a dynamic culture grounded in dialogue and encounter is a liberating adventure. *Seven*, cultural debate and cultural evolution is reaching a new level of intensity in South Africa as well as in the United States.⁴¹ What will we look like in a hundred years' time? What will we feel like? How will successive generations react to the cocksure statements we make about truth, religious persuasion, and a notion of what is right and wrong?

South African culture, nation building, and value systems are still in the making. Few would deny this. Nation building is unfinished business. Change is the challenge of the day. This makes for a measure of tolerance and understanding in South Africa, amid even the most heated debates. Established nations that regard themselves as having run the race with the battle won, especially those within these nations who revel in the *status quo*, may find the challenges of change a little difficult to digest. Whatever the base from which we respond to change, this much is certain—times are a-changing. We would do well to explore and create models that have the potential to nourish us in our need to respond creatively rather to resist stubbornly. I am suggesting that Kuyperian thought, augmented with a sense of African belonging, may just be worth throwing into the stew.

⁴¹ James Moulder, "Moral Education in a Multicultural Environment," *Acta Academica* no. 24 (1992): 17.

Has Christianity Failed in Asia?

by SAMUEL HUGH MOFFETT

Dr. Samuel Hugh Moffett is Henry Luce Winter Professor of Ecumenics and Mission Emeritus. He delivered this address in Luce Library on April 21, 2005, on the occasion of the dedication of the "Moffett Korea Collection" of books, papers, and photographs.

I THANK YOU FOR ALL the kind words and for what you have done and are doing here in Special Collections. Our “Moffat” clan motto is a rather mournful *spero meliora*, “I hope for better things.” Well, we mourn no more. What could we ever hope for better than this? It is a great honor.

And these are great days for mission—the Christian world mission. My subject title is “Has Christianity Failed in Asia?” which tilts the question a little toward the negative. But I am going to try to convince you that the answer is, “No, it has not failed.” In fact I am much more pessimistic about the declining old Christendom of the West than I am about the vital new churches of what we condescendingly call “the third world.” But it is also true that anyone who talks about Asia has a problem. Asia is so vast and varied that anything you say about one part of it is going to be false about another part.¹ Let me give you an example. Consider two famous authors who have written on that subject. One says Christianity has failed in Asia and the other says it has not. The first one is a highly respected Indian historian, K. M. Panikkar. About fifty years ago, he said emphatically, “the [Christian] attempt to convert Asia has failed.”² But the second, an equally famous professor, Harvard’s mercurial Harvey Cox, wrote more recently that Christianity in Asia not only is not failing, it is *succeeding* and succeeding spectacularly. He says it could “eventually become a major force in all of southeast Asia [and in] China, Mongolia and Siberia.” “Nearly half the population [of South Korea],” he said, “is [already] churched.”³

Who is right, Panikkar or Cox? Is Christianity dead in Asia, or is it about to explode across the continent like “fire from heaven,” as Cox describes it? My thesis today is that Panikkar and Cox are both wrong but also both partly right, and I think Cox, the optimist, is more right than Panikkar. I believe that Asia is the greatest political, economic, and Christian challenge in the world today—a challenge, not a failure. Here is why I think so. Asia is not just

¹ My favorite verse on ambiguity in the use of the word “Asia” is Luke 6:16, referring to one of Paul’s missions, “And the Holy Spirit forbade them to go into *Asia*!”

² K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953), 297.

³ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 220. It was Pentecostalism that impressed him most.

another continent; it is a supercontinent. It is *big*, so big that the United Nations divides it into four subcontinents: North, South, East, and West Asia.⁴ Europe by comparison is just a large, dumpy promontory dangling from the dominant land mass of Asia! And Asia is *crowded*. It holds nearly 60 percent of the world's people. Do you know what percentage of the world's population is in North America? Less than 6 percent!—6 percent compared with Asia's 60 percent. And Asia is *religious*. It is the birthplace of all the world's five largest religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, and Christianity. It surprises me that western Christians are still startled to be reminded that Christianity is by birth Asian, not western. Jesus Christ was born in Asia. That is the good news.

But I can not dodge the bad news. Of all the world's large continents, in the proportion of the number of Christians to the total population, Asia is the least Christian. Statistics from David Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia* show how geographically uneven is the spread of Christians around the world: Latin America is reported as being 92 percent Christian; Northern America, 84 percent (at this point you may recognize one of the problems of rating religions by the numbers!); Europe, including Russia, 76 percent; Africa, 50 percent; and Asia (including the Middle East), only 8 percent.⁵

So is Panikkar right after all? If ninety-two of every one hundred Asians have resisted the magnetism of Christianity around the world, has Christianity failed in Asia? Let me answer that question by choosing *East Asia* as a representative sampling of Asia as a whole. It is just one of the four regions into which the United Nations divides Asia geographically but is arguably the most globally significant and largest of the four. All but a sliver of East Asia is made up of four countries: China, Japan, and North and South Korea. We in the West should consider the future consequences of the fact that those four Asian countries, in only one section of Asia, have nearly as many people as all three of our proud western continents combined—Europe, North America, and Latin America. East Asia has a population of 1,460,000,000; our three western *continents* have 1,560,000,000. Furthermore, for all their obvious immense differences, those four Asian countries are united by the heri-

⁴ East Asia has more people than Africa and Latin America combined. China alone has more people than Europe and North America combined. India alone has more than all Africa.

⁵ David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Statistics in this lecture are taken from the *World Christian Encyclopedia*. For a fair and perceptive analysis of cliometrics, or "quantitative history," as "history by the numbers" is technically called, see Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 387–341. His critical assessment is that cliometrics is "now in the mainstream of historiography [and] the value of quantification within clear limits has been conceded."

tage of one common cultural foundation: the indelible effect of three thousand years of China's dominance on the rim of the eastern edge of Asia.

I am going to make a counter-claim. If we have *not* failed in historically strategic East Asia, who can say that Christianity is a failure in Asia? I will claim that despite the mistakes and failures of Christians in Asia, both by missionaries and national Christians, God has used "the weak to put to shame the strong," and Christians have expanded so fast in East Asia that the Churches there, far from hopeless, may change the religious history of the whole continent for the next century, and if that is true—it could change the history of the whole world.

China: Where Failure Now Looks Like Success

Let me start with China. With a population of 1,214,000,000, it has 4.5 times the number of people as the United States. But did not Christianity *fail* in China? It has never been a Christian country. (Today Christians make up 6.5 to 8 percent of the population.) Now it is a communist country. Does that not indicate failure? Five times in the long history of Christianity in East Asia, Christians opened the door to China, and five times China slammed the door shut against them.⁶ There is no time this hour to review that history. Yes, we failed, time after time—Nestorians, Roman Catholics, and finally Protestants—but Panikkar tends to remember only the times the door closed. He needs to be reminded that each time the door closed, Christians opened it again and came back stronger than before.

Let me tell you how I got caught in the *last* closing of that door when the Communists slammed it shut in 1951 and threw us missionaries out. I must confess that at the time, I came close to agreeing with Panikkar. I thought we had failed again. I reached China in 1947, just in time to see the end of 150 years of remarkable Christian progress in that huge country. For a time in the 1920s and early 1930s there were 8,000 Protestant missionaries in China. But the Chinese Roman Catholic community in 1949, on the eve of the revolution, was reported to be four times as large as that of the Protestants.⁷ Christians multiplied at all levels. It was said that in the "Who's Who in China" 25 percent of China's intellectual and political elite professed to be Christian. Missionaries were particularly admired for their medical work. By

⁶ These five periods can be broken down as follows: (1) Nestorian (635-907); (2) Nestorian II, Roman Catholic (1200-1368); (3) Roman Catholic II (1552-1773); (4) Protestant I, Roman Catholic III (1807-1949); and (5) the Communist Revolution (1949).

⁷ G. T. Brown, *Christianity and the People's Republic of China* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1996), 78. This is a revision of earlier, widely stated estimates of 700,000 Protestants and 3,000,000 Roman Catholics.

1949, their 538 Christian hospitals were among the most progressive in the country. One estimate claims that four out of ten of the "qualified physicians" in China had probably been educated in mission-founded medical schools.⁸

Christians pioneered also in the struggle for women's rights. They led the opposition to foot-binding. But much more culturally transforming was Christian emphasis on education for women. The largest, best known, and most singularly feminine of the Christian colleges was Ginling College in Nanking, founded by Methodists in 1915.⁹ "The number of women in the Christian colleges quadrupled between 1920 and 1925."¹⁰ Three years later a Ginling graduate made history. Dr. Wu Yi-Fang, an earnest Christian, returned from graduate study in America with a doctorate in biology from the University of Michigan to become the first Chinese woman president of a college in Chinese history. The year was 1928.¹¹

China even had a Christian ruler, a general named Chiang Kai-shek, a Methodist, and many thought that his Christian wife was a greater influence globally than he was! Some began to think that the Christian General Chiang, the acknowledged Christian ruler of the largest country in the world, would be a second Emperor Constantine, a Constantine for the Christianizing of Asia. But as we all know, history's answer was "No!" In fact, in 1949, "the number of Christians [had] never reached more than 1% of the population."¹² The "golden age" of Christianity was gone, and looking like just another failure.

I found that out the hard way in the revolution. My timing could not have been worse. The year 1947 was not a good one for going to China as a missionary. The country was breaking up in civil war—Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists against Mao Tse-tung's Communists. I asked, "Who will win?" expecting the answer to be, "The Christian general." But to my surprise even some of my Christian friends said, "The communists." And they were right. Within a year and a half the communists captured the university where I was teaching and went on to take the rest of the country.

In Nanking, early in 1950—I had left Peking to teach at Nanking Seminary—Dr. Wu Yi-Fang of Ginling College, whom I mentioned above, sent

⁸ David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 52.

⁹ Jessie G. Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 132-138, 157, 508, 532. The first Chinese Christian college for women was the North China Union College for Women, which opened in 1904 with the unexpected support of the Empress Dowager, hitherto violently anti-Christian. A few years later it merged into a coeducational union with what became Yenching University.

¹⁰ Lutz, 137, citing *Handbook of Christian Colleges*, 1926.

¹¹ Archie R. Crouch, *Rising through the Dust* (New York: Friendship Press, 1978), 166-169.

¹² Lutz, 526.

me a message. "May I come and stay with you a few days?" Of course we said yes. She looked exhausted. "I just needed to get away from the pressures," she said, and for three days she cried and prayed with us. "But there are things I can't tell you," she said. We soon learned what she meant. The government launched a massive reconstruction of the country's educational system, and all private colleges were to reorganize under communist control—in particular the sixteen Protestant and three Roman Catholic colleges. A year later I was detained, given a people's trial, and deported. Not long after that, we heard that there was not a single "Christian" college left.

"When we get rid of you missionaries," the Communists boasted, "the Chinese church will wither away." And when I left China I was almost discouraged enough to believe them. Maybe Panikkar was right and Christianity *was* about to die in Asia. There were then between three and four million Christians in China, over three million Roman Catholics and about one million Protestants, and the persecutions began shortly after we were expelled. They escalated in 1966 into ten years of the horrors of what was politely called a "cultural revolution." For one dark period in those frightening days not one church was left open in all China, except perhaps a service in one of the foreign legations. I thought we had all failed—missions, missionaries, and all.

But Panikkar and I were both wrong. Today, after a half century or more of the red revolution, it is the communists who are withering away—no, not withering, that would be an exaggeration—but they *are* rapidly and radically changing course. Only with great difficulty are they hanging on to pure communist political power. And the Chinese Christians? There was no withering there! As government pressure softened in 1976, after the death of Mao Tse-tung (or Zedong), one visitor summarized the resilience of the persecuted Christians, "We are survivors. We were once bitten by the tiger. . . . Its claws left scars on our faces so we are not handsome." Another added, "We not only survived—look at us—we grew."¹³

That was thirty years ago. Yes, they grew and grew and grew. No one really knows how many Christians there are in China today. The government says about 15 or 20 million. But a more realistic figure, though it has to be an educated guess, is probably somewhere between 45 and 85 million people. That may be all right, but where else but in China do we accept margins of error of 40 million people? Nevertheless, even the *possibility* of growth from three or four million to a possible 85 million right through a revolution is not

¹³ Carl Lawrence, *The Church in China* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), 113, 115.

"withering away."¹⁴ It would mean that Christianity is on the verge of matching the 100 million claimed for Buddhism in China.

So, what of the future in China? There are still problems, the most pressing of which is the splintering of Chinese Christianity. Protestants and Roman Catholics are both split in two on the issue of legalized state control of religion. When the state is antireligious and all powerful and all too fond of the death penalty, the issue becomes explosive. For Protestants, a large group accepted a compromise. They called themselves the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. A smaller group resisted and, to escape persecution, went underground as independent house churches. For Catholics, the demand for state control meant renouncing the authority of the Pope. Many refused and were persecuted; but many also cut their ties with the Vatican and formed what was called the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. That was fifty years ago.

This is the situation today. China's Christians are still divided. But the Catholic/Protestant balance has been completely reversed. In 1949 there were three times as many Catholics as Protestants; today there are perhaps eight or nine times as many Protestants as Catholics. The independent, often charismatic, noncompromising Protestant house churches have far outstripped the growth of the government-regulated Three-Self Church. And on the Catholic side it is the compromising side, the state-regulated, "Pope-deserting" Catholic Patriotic Association that has grown faster, at least visibly, than the persecuted, papal loyalist *Roman Catholics*.

Be careful before you jump to judge one side right and one side wrong in either the Protestant schism or the Catholic. Even Peter and Paul were not above arguing now and then. And both sides can quote the Bible. The Protestant "Three-Self Church" chose the Biblical admonition, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities" (Rom. 13:1), and its churches, though severely restricted, were allowed to remain open. The "house churches" chose a different text, "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29), and for decades they refused to be governed by an atheistic regime.

The "mainline" Protestant "Three-Self Church" is to be commended for preserving a visible presence for Chinese Christianity through the long years of the revolution. It was right in thinking that Christians must not be afraid of social reform. But it ran a risk—too much dependence on government, and a tendency to emphasize political social action over faithfulness to the

¹⁴ A "doubly affiliated" deduction of 25 million people is checked against the listed total for Asia: 300 million (D. Barrett and T. M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends*, 383).

worship and doctrines and the counsel of God in His Word. The conservative house churches, which went underground, now represent the largest and fastest-growing religious movement in all China. But they, too, run a risk—the lack of an educated Christian leadership, and often too little opportunity or ability to effect wider reforms in China.

As for China's Catholics, it is quite possible that in the long run, the loyalist "Roman" Catholics, though they have been persecuted out of sight, may have the final advantage. The Communist-controlled, self-ordained bishops of the Catholic Patriotic Association are not recognized outside China, but the underground loyalists have a Pope known to all the world.

They may even have a "secret" cardinal. In 1979 the Pope, John Paul II secretly (*in pectore*) appointed a Chinese cardinal for the loyalists, Bishop Gong Pin-Mei (Ignatius Kung). Bishop Kung was an authentic Roman Catholic bishop, born in a five-generation Catholic family. He was bishop of Shanghai and was thrown into prison in 1955, to "wither away" for thirty years. When he was released (but still kept in house arrest), he did not know that for his last six years in prison he had been a "secret cardinal." It was kept a secret for another six years and not publicly announced until 1991.¹⁵ Cardinal Kung died not long ago in America. But there is a rumor even now that another "secret cardinal" for China may soon be announced.

Japan: The Church that Did Not Grow

The story of Christianity in Japan is a wake-up, cold shower of hard history that needs to be added to the story of Christianity in Asia. It is an antidote to premature Christian triumphalism, a more subdued story sandwiched in between two brighter stories of apparent triumph (Korea and China). It reminds us that Christianity is not always a success story as the world defines success. Time does not permit adequate treatment here, but let me just say that it does not lead us to much Christian boasting to learn that there were more professing Christians in Japan 350 years ago, in the early 1600s, than there are today. Japan's publicly reported Christian percentage of the total population is less than 2 percent (though others claim 3.6 percent), compared with about 7 or 8 percent in China, or as high as 30 percent or more in South Korea.

¹⁵ Richard C. Bush, Jr., *Religion in Communist China* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 123-126, 136-139, 146-149; *Catholic World News* (Jan. 22, 2001, (<http://www.cnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=14718>) (accessed July 1, 2005) and "A Brief Biography of His Eminence Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-Mei (Gong)," (<http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org/biography/>) (accessed July 1, 2005).

In the nineteenth century, while the Chinese empire was crumbling, the Japanese empire was riding high, ready to conquer the world. In 1894, it easily defeated massively larger China. A Chinese army came rolling south into Korea with drums and banners and Mongolian-style Manchurian cavalry straight out of the days of Genghis Khan. But its Chinese officers were still technically being chosen on the basis of their ability with the bow and arrow—the mark of a gentleman. The Japanese, on the other hand, silent and efficient, had the most modern of weapons. The great land battle of the Sino-Japanese War was fought over the Korean city of Pyongyang (now the capital of North Korea) where my father had just established residence as the first permanent Protestant missionary in the interior outside the official treaty ports. After the battle, as he walked through the battlefield and counted the Chinese bodies laid out for miles, he said he felt he was watching the end of the Middle Ages—guns against bows and arrows, umbrellas, and obsolete weapons. Ten years later, in 1905, little Japan defeated another empire, Russia, in the Russo-Japanese War. And when my father saw his first Russian prisoners in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps, he said he felt that he was watching the end of the white man's domination of Asia.

So a victorious imperial Japan, unlike defeated imperial China, met the incoming wave of twentieth-century Christian missionaries with an air of assurance that felt no need to re-examine its own religious foundations and consider Christianity as a serious alternative. After all, it had just soundly defeated one of the greatest Christian empires in the world, Russia. The result was little progress of Christian missions in Japan. Another unanticipated result was that only thirty years later, in the 1930s, having annexed Korea, Japan began a crusade to conquer the whole of East Asia, beginning with Korea, China, and next, perhaps, the world.

But to conquer the world, Japan saw that it needed more than an army; it needed a motivating religious faith. And what better faith than Japanese Shintoism, with its great appeal to nationalist pride and its syncretistic ties to Japanese Buddhism. So, beginning with Korea, which they absorbed in 1905 after the victory over Russia, Japan began to force Christians in their empire to adjust to Japanese Shinto Shrine worship—worship of the emperor as divine. Thus, while some in China were just beginning to think they might have a Chinese Constantine, Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek, Japan already had its emperor-god, Hirohito.

We know now that the Generalissimo never became a Constantine and that Hirohito was not divine. Japan lost its crusade, but Japan is still not Christian. Its people learned to copy western technology without adopting what was then commonly called the “western” religion. But it would be far

from the truth to describe Christianity in Japan as a failure. Many factors contributed to the slowness of its growth—patriotic pride, the state religion, Shinto, and its amazing economic rise, among others. (The Bible has always pointed to an obsession with riches as being a barrier to Christian faith.)

I see two major differences between Korea and Japan in respect to the impact of Christianity on those two countries. One was the *soil on which the seed of the gospel was planted*. Korea was a shattered nation. Its traditional religions had failed her. She was ready to listen to a religion of hope. Japan felt it already had in itself all the hope it needed. And the harvest in that difficult soil was not plenteous. But the Christians it *did* produce were outstanding—Kagawa, Kitamori, and Uchimura. And it sent out cross-cultural missionaries across the world in the twentieth century farther than its military empire at its widest extent ever was able to reach.

The second difference, in the twentieth century, was a blend of theological and methodological traits in mission policies that differed markedly in Japan from those in Korea. Here I refer to Protestant missions, not Roman Catholic. In Japan after World War II, the theology of the mainline missions gradually became more liberal and less evangelical than in Korea (if I may use those labels loosely). The Japan missions had earlier strongly stressed the need for independence and evangelistic outreach in their emerging churches, but in pursuit of these worthy goals, the foreign missionaries found themselves gradually separating from active congregational church life and concentrating their attention more on issues of education and social action than on outright evangelism and proclamation. They became closer to the elite and educated than to the people in the pews. It strengthened leadership but narrowed growth.

Korea: A Success Story with Problems

It is hard for Protestant Christian observers not to be triumphalist in describing South Korea, where Christians make up 40 percent of the population. A recent visitor returned not long ago from that country almost in shock. Methodism, he said, began in England with John Wesley, but the largest Methodist congregation in the world is not in England. It is in Seoul, Korea. Presbyterianism began in Geneva with John Calvin, but the largest Presbyterian congregation in the world is not in Geneva. It is in Seoul, Korea. Pentecostalism as a modern movement began in Southern California, but the largest Pentecostal congregation in the world is not in Southern California. It is in Seoul, Korea.

We do not have to go to Korea to sound triumphant about Korean Christianity. Here in America, mainline Protestantism is secularizing and declining all around us—Presbyterians have been losing members at the rate of 40,000 a year for thirty years. But right here in Princeton, put the point of a draftsman's compass in the middle of town, at Mercer and Nassau, and draw a circle with a 70-mile radius. In that circle you will find 700 Korean-American churches that were not here forty years ago.

What happened in Korea to produce such an explosion, spreading now not just in Korea but around the world? The growth is obvious. Korean Protestants grew faster than Catholics; and Presbyterians grew faster than Methodists, Pentecostals, and Baptists combined. When my father went to Korea 115 years ago, just six years after the first resident Protestant missionary arrived, there were fewer than 250 Protestant Christians in all Korea, north and south, and only two little Protestant congregations, one Presbyterian and two Methodist. Those 250, north and south, in 1890, grew to nearly 12,000,000 Protestants in the south alone today, not counting 2.5 million Catholics, and a half million in "marginal sects," such as the Unification Church.

More significant for the future of Christianity in Asia, those twelve million Protestants have sent out 12,000 missionaries around the world, and most significantly to the secularizing west, which once so recently sent missionaries to them. Their missionaries, I might add, are often making the same mistakes we did, but there is no stopping their enthusiasm for proclaiming Jesus Christ as Savior of the world.

But what was it that made them grow? The best answer I know was given by my father sixty years ago. To an inquiring committee from America, he simply said, "For the last fifty years we lifted up to this people the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit did the rest." Too simple, maybe, but I sincerely believe that if Christians do not begin there, they usually do not begin at all. However, there are other important reasons why the Korean church grew. I will mention first a nontheological reason. Christian missions to Korea came in with no imperialist, colonial baggage. It was an Asian colonialism (Japanese) that Korea resented, not the west. The American missionaries came as friends, not exploiters. A second nontheological reason is that the Protestants came at a time when Korea's religious and cultural heritage was crumbling. A 500-year-old Korean dynasty was tottering to its end. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shamanism had all failed them when the country was conquered by Japan. The apparent failure of their old traditions opened the way for them to look for hope to the new, enthusiastic faith brought by their friends, the missionaries.

But just as important, and probably even more immediately effective, was a third reason: the wise mission policy of those early missionaries. It is called the “Nevius Method,” named for an 1850 graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, John Nevius, who went to China and reacted against the old methods of mission work there. We missionaries, he said, kept control of the Chinese church in missionary hands too long. His advice was, “Trust the Holy Spirit, and trust the converts the Spirit gives you. Let them evangelize their own country and build up a *Chinese* church.”

His policy was not adopted by the Presbyterian missions in China, but in 1890, when Nevius brought the same message to a little band of pioneer missionaries in Korea, they listened, and it became a catalytic turning point in the subsequent history of Korean Christianity. The Presbyterian mission adopted the Nevius Method as its official policy. It is no coincidence that although Roman Catholic missions began a hundred years earlier, and Methodists at the same time as the Presbyterians, there are now twice as many Korean Presbyterians as Catholics, and five times as many Presbyterians as Methodists.

The Nevius Method is known today as the “Three-Self Method,” which also has roots in the “three-self” mission strategies advocated by Henry Venn in England and Rufus Anderson in America. The first “self” is *self-government*, that is, turn over the church to Korean control as soon as there is a Korean ordained ministry and eldership to lead it. That was done in 1907, the year the first class graduated from the first Korean seminary. The second “self” is *self-support*. That was done even earlier, in the 1890s. The mission decided not to pay the salaries of Korean pastors or build Korean churches with foreign money. Instead, in faith, they entrusted the full responsibilities of Christian stewardship to their converts. Koreans have been “tithers” ever since. The third “self” is *self-propagation*, or lay evangelism. But that deserves to be another point by itself. I call it “the Korean Initiative.”

So the fourth reason is *the Korean initiative*. Evangelism was emphasized as the responsibility of all Christians, not just Korean pastors and foreign missionaries. And oh how enthusiastically Koreans can evangelize! Korean Protestantism began not with foreign missionaries in Korea but with a Korean lay evangelist, Suh Sang-Yoon, even before the first missionaries arrived. He was converted in Manchuria by Scottish missionaries in 1876. He came back to Korea in 1883 and formed a little Christian community in his home village a whole year before the first American missionaries landed—Horace Allen, a Presbyterian doctor (1884); Horace Underwood, a Presbyterian minister (1885); and Henry G. Appenzeller, a Methodist minister (1884). But the Korean layman, Suh Sang-Yun, was first. As one missionary

remarked in admiration years ago, "the Korean Christians have always been one step ahead of the missionaries."

A fifth reason for growth was *prayer*. A distinctive feature of Korean church life is the day-break prayer meeting. It takes spiritual discipline to get up at four or five in the morning for spiritual exercise, not physical exercise. One Presbyterian church in Seoul has four day-break prayer meetings for its congregation: at four, five, six, and seven o'clock every weekday morning. The six and seven o'clock meetings each draw an attendance of 5,000 people. I am not surprised that his Presbyterian congregation has 70,000 members—that is three times the size of our whole New Brunswick Presbytery!

A sixth reason was *Bible study*. The early missionaries translated the Bible into common, vernacular Korean using the Korean alphabet, so that everyone could read it. They did not use the difficult Chinese characters, which were taught only to sons of the elite by Confucian scholars. One of the requirements quickly established for full communicant membership in the church in those pioneer days was learning to read. "How can you be a Christian if you can't read the Bible?" That may explain why Korea today has a higher rate of literacy than the United States does!

A seventh reason is *revival*. The Presbyterian church in Korea was organized in the midst of a spiritual revival, explosive and spectacular, that swept through the peninsula from 1903 to 1907. It touched off massive ingatherings of church growth. It permanently stamped the church's character with a revivalistic fervor that has been compared to the revivals of John Wesley. Though the principal benefactors of the revival were the Presbyterians, it was ecumenical. The Koreans said to the missionaries, "Some of you go back to John Calvin, and some of you to John Wesley, but we can go back no further than 1907 when we first really knew the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁶

An eighth reason for growth was Korean Christianity's *refusal to polarize evangelism and social action*. It practiced both, because to Korean Christians both were gospel, good news. The early missionaries were anything but spiritually other-worldly. The first missionary, Dr. Allen, opened Korea's first modern hospital and then moved from the mission into diplomacy to become an early American minister (ambassador). The pioneers gave Korea its first schools for women, its first schools for the blind. Underwood imported kerosene, agricultural implements, and, a little later, his brother's new product, the Underwood typewriter. Moffett opened a timber concession on the Yalu River, managed by Christian Koreans. Foreign traders objected. "That wasn't missionary business," they said, "It was infringing on

¹⁶ Moffett, *Christians of Korea* (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), 53ff.

the trader's profits." The missionaries replied, "We are not doing it for ourselves; we are teaching our converts modern techniques and business methods so they will be able to compete on a more equal footing with western traders as the West sweeps in on them." "Besides," they said, "no national problem or concern is out of bounds for Christian care and concern." Korea's Christians were taught both commandments: "Love God, and love your neighbor." It is no coincidence that the Republic of Korea's first president after independence from Japan was a Christian, a Methodist; and of the last two retired presidents, one is a Presbyterian elder, and the other a Roman Catholic, with a Methodist wife.

But I must not let myself be carried away with beating the success drums for Korean church growth. It speaks for itself. There is one reason for church growth that I do not brag about. It is *church schism*. One of the least pleasant facts of Korean church history is that one way the Korean church grows is by splitting. Where else in the world will you find a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ Presbyterian Church where Jesus is not speaking to Christ? But by the grace of God, when a Korean Presbyterian church splits, in ten years each half seems to grow to be as large as the whole was before the split.

Let me close with seven lessons we can learn from the history of the church in Asia, beginning with this thesis: *the future of Christianity in the twenty-first century will be largely shaped by the rise of the third-world churches.* (1) Christians will lose if they depend too long on political power, whether national or foreign. (2) They will lose if they fail to be identified with, and appreciate, their own national cultural heritage, and also if they fail to bear a counter-cultural witness within that heritage. (3) They will lose if their enthusiasm for evangelism wanes and they do not share the Good News of Jesus Christ. (4) They will lose if they do not validate their spiritual message with social compassion and integrity. (5) They will lose if they fail to produce educated leadership for the nation and the church. (6) They will also lose, however, if they concentrate on social programs to the neglect of the personal and corporate disciplines and responsibilities of the Christian life within the congregation. (7) Finally, Christians will lose everything if they abandon their theological center: one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and one Savior, Jesus Christ; and one definitive, inspired rule of faith and practice, the Scriptures.

Chosen Vessels: The Dedication of the Moffett Korea Collection

by DARRELL L. GUDER

Dr. Darrell L. Guder is Henry Luce Winter Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology and Dean of Academic Affairs at Princeton Theological Seminary. He delivered these remarks in the Luce Library on April 21, 2005, at the dedication of the Moffett Korea Collection.

WE ARE GATHERED today to dedicate the Moffett Korea Collection and to acknowledge with great gratitude and respect the legacy of missional faithfulness represented by these collections, by the Moffett family, and especially by our two friends and colleagues here with us, Sam and Eileen Moffett.

There are concentric circles of significance in this dedication of the Moffett Korea Collection. At the center, defining everything else, stands the mission of God as the mission of witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Easter becomes good news for the world at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit empowers the first church to become the witnessing church. That act of empowerment makes clear that God intends all the world to hear, and for that purpose the Spirit made it possible for all those gathered in Jerusalem to hear the Gospel in their own tongues. Carrying the Gospel across cultural boundaries has been the mandate of the church ever since. We celebrate God's faithfulness to that Pentecostal mission throughout the history of the witnessing church and especially in the formation of the Korean Presbyterian Church a little over a century ago. Now, that same Spirit is empowering the Korean Presbyterian Church to continue the mission of Pentecost through its missionaries around the world.

As a first ripple of impact, this collection is a concrete expression of that central mission of God, carried out in a particular time and place by the generations of the Moffett family and their colleagues. The library and papers of Sam and Eileen Moffett are both a testimony to that missional commitment and a resource for continuing study of Korean Christianity, theology, and mission. This collection represents a notable expansion of the Luce Library's now distinguished cluster of research centers, including the Karl Barth and Abraham Kuyper research collections. With the establishment of the Moffett Korea Collection, the emphasis shifts to Asia, representing the massive movement in the demography of worldwide Christianity during the 20th century. Since the famed Edinburgh Mission Conference in 1910, which Sam Moffett's father attended, the center of gravity of the global

church has shifted from the west to the south and the east, from the North Atlantic to Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the South Pacific. Our library is already justly known for its excellent collection in the area of Latin American Christianity, a legacy of the missionary vision of John Mackay. The Moffett Korea Collection now expands the already rich engagement of Princeton in the theological enterprise of Korean Christianity, represented by the constant stream of excellent students in all our degree programs from both the Korean and the Korean-American churches, and by distinguished Korean colleagues such as the Professors Eunny Lee, Leong Seow, and Sang Lee. Our Korean students, colleagues, and guest researchers will especially benefit from the availability of these important historical holdings.

There is a third circle emerging from this concrete demonstration of God's mission at work. These books, papers, and documents attest to the gift and the inspiring example of Sam and Eileen Moffett, whose spirit of missional dedication and hospitality tangibly shapes this collection. Karl Barth writes, toward the end of the last full volume of the *Church Dogmatics*, about persons who are "models of Christian life and action." He states that the faith community often speaks through "individuals impressing their life and witness on their own time and place and beyond." These are those "chosen vessels" of which Acts 9:15 speaks. What is important is not that they hold particular offices but that in them "what is common to all Christians, should be in some sense illuminated and for a time and in certain circles both *ad intra* and *ad extra* acquire in them an exemplary, directive and canonical character."¹ Certainly, here at Princeton Theological Seminary, we know that exemplary, directive, and canonical character *ad intra*, as Sam and Eileen continue to minister to this community. In the establishment of the Moffett Korea Collection, we are guaranteeing as an act of appropriate stewardship that these "models of Christian life and action," through their scholarly and pastoral legacy, will continue to serve Christ and His Church as such models *ad extra*, from generation to generation, from chapter to chapter in the unfolding history of God's people as God's called and sent witness to the love we know and proclaim in Jesus Christ.

Let us pray:

Loving and Holy God, we thank you for your faithfulness to your own compassionate and healing purposes for this broken and sinful world—that faithfulness that through your Spirit calls out peoples and persons to be instruments of your grace and messengers of your loving

¹ Karl Barth. *Church Dogmatics* IV/3 second half (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark), 887–88.

reign. We thank you, today, especially, for the faithfulness to your calling demonstrated by Sam and Eileen Moffett in their many decades of service to your Gospel in Korea, China, and in these United States. We thank you for their life-long generosity and hospitality of spirit, which have both shown and shared your love with countless friends and students. And now, we thank you for this concrete extension of their generosity and hospitality in the establishment of this center for the study of Korean Christianity. We thank you for these resources for study and research, for the impetus to ongoing scholarship to edify your church, and for the inspiration shared by such a collection, as a constant reminder that you are the Lord of the harvest and that our task is to continue sowing seed, as Sam and Eileen have done so well for so long. We now dedicate this space—these books, papers, letters, and archives, the rooms and the spirit that fills them—to your greater glory and to your purposes for the global church, for Korean Christian witness, and for scholarship in the service of your Gospel here at the Luce Library and Princeton Theological Seminary. We pray that you would enable us and the generations that follow us to be responsible stewards of these blessings. We pray that every scholar who comes here to work with these resources will be helped by your Spirit to use well and fruitfully the wealth of knowledge collected here, and even more, to discern and be encouraged by the goodness and beauty of the witness of these two servants, so that “grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.”

Amen.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Chaves, Mark. *Congregations in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004. Pp. 291. \$29.95.

Religious congregations, now numbering over 300,000, are among the most enduring of American institutions. Yet, until recently, the scholarly study of American congregations has been notoriously underdeveloped. Beginning in the early 1980s, however, major and memorable studies of these congregations have multiplied, broadened, and deepened. One (although not the only) reason for this expansion has been the employment of sophisticated, sociological-type surveys that provide a counterpoint to anecdotal accounts of congregations. Mark Chaves's book *Congregations in America* is a notable employment of systematic data gathering and interpretation. Chaves has woven his data around three overlapping patterns of congregational culture—the worship events that are produced, the religious knowledge that is transmitted, and the artistic activities that are sponsored.

There are *at least* four reasons that this study is important for all who wonder what transpires in ordinary American congregations. First, Chaves, a sociologist of American religion at the University of Arizona, wanted to identify the "prevalent form of collective religious expression in American society." To that end, in 1998 he devised the National Congregations Study (NCS), which eventually collected data from 1236 congregations. In addition, he conducted one-hour interviews with a key informant (usually a clergy person or staff) in each of these communities. To generate this sampling, Chaves consulted with scholars at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, which publishes the results of frequent in-person interviews known as the General Social Survey (GSS). Chaves secured permission to interview those persons in the GSS who said they attended religious services at least once a year. Through this creative data-gathering technique Chaves explored "the nature of congregational involvement in social service, political, [worship] ritual, educational and artistic activities." An appendix of fourteen pages details Chaves's findings. If for no other reason, this book is significant for its methodological advancement for current congregational studies. All who appreciate methodological procedures will especially applaud his clear explanations in Appendix A.

A second reason for this book's importance lies in what Chaves discovered. To keep within boundaries of empirical research, Chaves focused on practices rather than reasons or motivations. When he tallied his findings, Chaves concluded that American congregational practices (1) "transmit religious

meanings through ritual and religious education" and (2) facilitate a "surprising amount of artistic activity...." What surprised Chaves were repeated findings that "congregations are not, in general, social service organizations....On average, only ten persons within a congregation engage in some kind of social service programming...."

To these generalizations, Chaves adds another, namely, that "substantial amounts of artistic activity—conceptualized broadly—occur in religious congregations." Music, of all sorts, tops the list of such artistic practices but not exclusively so. Almost three quarters of the congregations studied here performed a skit or play, and nearly one third employed dance in services. "The arts are used to produce religion, and religion provides social and organizational contexts for artistic activity." In this sense the art in a church is an important marker to its identity. Such artistic activity, Chaves also found, provides "bridges" and "bonding" with social groups outside the confines of a particular congregation.

A third reason to take this book very seriously lies in Chaves's analysis of congregation-based worship practices. If a worship event fails to occur, "the congregation is in much deeper trouble than if its social service project fails...." While worship services are constructed from a wide and variegated "repertoire" of worship elements, such services are primarily shaped from "below," that is, by the social status of the participants, rather than from "above," that is, by the denominational and religious traditions in which the congregations are embedded. Because "congregations, like all voluntary associations, tend toward social homogeneity," a congregation's sociodemographic composition usually determines its worship style. Different classes of folks do different things in their respective worship services.

Finally, Chaves contends that most congregations are "aggregates of individuals or, perhaps more appositely, a group of small groups...." Such individualized alignments, he found, "may or may not cohere into a community or fellowship or organization with true collective identity and unity of purpose." Not only did Chaves find an "astonishing wide range of nonreligious activities taking place in congregations," but he also determined that most "congregations set very few hurdles in the way of people who want to turn their interests and energies into a 'congregational' activity." Overarching theologically mandated visions and traditional ecclesial purposes are usually tweaked and adapted to accommodate the designs and desires of member coalitions. Chaves does not address what such ad hoc agendas imply for congregational leaders who are called, as one pastor friend put it, "to keep the herd headed in one direction."

In short, this fine work unveils what practices are *really* going on in contemporary American congregations. Some of us may long for a companion study that moves beyond sociological description to more experiential and normative probings. What, for example, happens within the interior lives of members during worship and artistic performances? Or, how would Chaves differentiate between worship and entertainment? To discover *what* is going on in congregation is undeniably useful; to discover *why* such practices occur is equally urgent. Nevertheless, this book remains indispensable for all congregational leaders if for no other reason than to provide an index or pattern by which the practices of one congregation can be compared with others. And comparisons, far from being odious, are usually instructive.

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Gregorian, Vartan. *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003. Pp. xi + 164. \$19.95.

The jacket of this slim volume is a photograph of the dome of the beautiful Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque of Isfahan in Iran, the author's country of origin. Representatively Islamic in consisting of intertwining geometric designs, one could gaze in wonder on this monument from any angle, and the pattern would never vary. Invariability, however, is the very image of Islam the author wishes to deconstruct. It is a welcome effort, considering the post-9/11 deluge of literature that reduces Islam's complexities to an interlocking web of generalities, forgetful of the fact that this religion, like all religions, is a semifictional construct that defies simplification.

The author, a distinguished historian and eminent educator who filled high positions at Ivy League institutions before his appointment as president of the Carnegie Foundation, brings to his project all the right convictions about "understanding" and "tolerance" but falls disappointingly short of being able to make a compelling case for these particular virtues, against advocates for the opposite, who are legion (kill 'em and convert 'em Ann Coulter, for instance, whom Gregorian singles out for well-deserved scorn). In this, he may, of course, exemplify American higher education's well-meaning but soft, humanistic orientation. Thus, although noble, Gregorian's eloquence may fall on deaf ears, even though applicants for Carnegie grants would be well advised to pay attention, philanthropy being a force by which scholarship is shaped and constrained.

That said, Gregorian's overall orientation is one I endorse. Although he is

not a religious scholar and his grasp of Islam seems a bit shaky (watch out for the Arabic transliterations, which are idiosyncratic), as a historian, his main argument is a sound one, namely, that Islam is not a timeless, unchanging entity, the same today as it was in the beginning, or homogeneous irrespective of context, in Cairo or Kuala Lumpur or Chicago. The idea of Islam as a monolithic civilization pervaded by a single rationality (or irrationality, as popular proponents of the “Green Threat” would have it) needs to be counterbalanced, and Gregorian is right that Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” rhetoric is riddled with risible reductionisms. For a quick overview of Islam’s internal diversity, this is a book that gets straight to the point, although its format, as anthropologist Clifford Geertz dismissively observed, is that of “a power-point executive of what Islam is about for [Carnegie Corporation’s] board of trustees” (“Which Way to Mecca?” *The New York Review of Books*, June 12, 2003). It turns out, moreover, that Gregorian may be more inclined toward civilizational essentialism than he realizes, for in this mosaic of Islam there is one particular piece of which he is especially fond, that of the long-reigning, Baghdad-based Abbasid Caliphate, which is to him the Islam that right-thinking Muslims should prefer.

Although I would not quarrel with Gregorian about the virtues of Abbasid Islam, he is, again, unable to explain why it would be good for Muslims to emulate today, except to invoke a bygone era of Islamic humanism as a possible corollary to the values of modern democratic societies. Thus, for all its antiessentialist rhetoric, Islam in *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith* seems rather embalmed, however gorgeous its Abbasid casket. How would Gregorian raise this time-bound body from the dead? Dialogue. Here, too, I can only join the chorus, although his dialogue model is the top-down variety, the kind that occurs at foundation-funded fetes, whereas what we need to know in the first place is *why* Islam ought to be engaged in dialogue. Gregorian comes close to grounding his eloquent plea in specifically religious terms in the capstone chapter, which cites a litany of quotations from a broad spectrum of religious leaders (the Dalai Lama, Pope John Paul II, et al.). Although laudable, and while such a book could hardly be expected to assume anything but a generically religious position on the value of religious particularity, one wonders why diversity should be valued the way Gregorian insists. To that end, one sees scope for Christians to respond with an appeal to the *imago Dei*. Without that, what is diversity—Islamic or any other—but inconvenient trivia that can be safely ignored by the antidualoguers for whom perception is reality?

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Sanneh, Lamin. *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003. Pp. xii + 138. \$12.00.

What does it take to subvert the recidivistic certainty that Christianity is—and ever shall be—too inextricably western to be spoken of as African or Asian without sounding oxymoronic (even though Christianity had been both before it became western)? A good question helps, and few could be better than the one asked in the title of this brief book by Lamin Sanneh, Professor of World Christianity at Yale Divinity School.

This is not the first time the question is being asked. One thinks of David Barrett's massive project of religiometrics, the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2nd ed., 2001), which reads like a seismograph gone berserk as it measures the massive forces unleashed by Christianity's abrupt continental shift from north to south. As one who anticipated what Barrett confirms, that Christianity already is a postwestern religion (its western population cohort having dropped from 80 percent to 40 percent between 1900 and 2000), Sanneh is known for the argument, formulated in *Translating the Message* (1989), that the Gospel's translatability is an essential key, if not *the* key, to understanding Christianity's transformation into a world religion. In the religious academy, many are persuaded that this is so, and—thanks in no small part to Sanneh—the Eurocentricity of Christian historiography is today more frankly faced.

In this book, Sanneh turns to the secular academy (unnamed “departments, institutions, and disciplines” are targeted in the kick-off sentence). In his experience, the academy spooks itself with visions of a world Christian tsunami triggered by unknown subterranean forces, churning up whole populations in volatile regions, and of peril to all, including the West. Because the waters have already been roiled by apocalyptic theses such as Samuel Huntington's (*The Clash of Civilizations*, 1996) and Philip Jenkins's (*The Next Christendom*, 2002), Sanneh should receive a standing ovation for the sanity of his apologia, which is what the book turns out to be, no less for world Christianity than for the conversions upon which its growth is predicated. One by one, in the format of a fictionalized dialogue, Sanneh strips the pretense off the shibboleths of World Christianity's cultured despisers, who see it as a civilizational throwback intrinsically prejudicial to modern values. For the most part, Sanneh treats his imaginary interlocutors with respect. Still, invested with real-life irrationalities, even his own inventions sometimes become unbearable; his patience breaks down most obviously when they betray a thinly disguised Afrophobia.

As much as I like the book, there are three ways I wish it were different. To start with, there is too much hype. Consider the following: “By 2002 Chris-

tian expansion continued to gather momentum, and the churches in Africa and Asia . . . were bursting at the seams with an uninterrupted influx of new members." *Whose Religion is Christianity?* is the wrong kind of book to leave readers in the dark as to *whose* Africa and, especially, *whose* Asia experiences this kind of untrammeled growth. There is also overkill, as if Christianity equals translatability: "Christianity seems unique in being the only world religion that is transmitted without the language or originating culture of its founder." It only seems so in *Whose Religion is Christianity?* because so much stands or falls on which *religion* is being compared with Christianity. Buddhism, which transcended its boundaries, translationally, before Christianity was even a twinkle in the galaxy of religions, makes the translatability thesis hard to sustain. Islam, Christianity's (allegedly) untranslatable binary opposite, makes an appearance in Sanneh's discussion—Buddhism should too. And although world Christianity's continental shift needs attention, there should be a way to put the world back into world Christianity, because in *Whose Religion is Christianity?* there is hardly a world of difference in Christianity. Notice how the continents drift together when an interlocutor asks, "What caused this structural shift. . .?" In reply, Sanneh invokes vernacularity, translatability's flip side, which helps explain African Christianity but not Asian: "The development of mother tongues as the means of receiving the gospel caused the shift." Without Africa, Christianity would not be a world religion, but when Africa is made into a world Christian Gondwanaland that other continents and Christianities are cut to fit around, a new sort of centricity seems to be emerging. It, too, will need to be more frankly faced.

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Stout, Jeffrey. *Democracy and Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004. Pp. 348 + xv. \$19.95.

This book addresses a complex of topical issues very widely discussed "in the disputed territory where philosophical, political and religious thought intersect." Its focus is democracy in contemporary America and, in particular, the vexed question of the place of religion in the public culture. Stout aims to engage in a "conversation" between the disciplines and to place himself firmly in the middle between the warring factions of secular liberalism and religious traditionalism. Among the warriors are Rawls and Rorty on the one side and Milbank, Hauerwas, and MacIntyre on the other. Stout gives their published work on these subjects sustained attention—some laudatory, some critical. He wants to secure his *via media* with a kind of philosophical

pragmatism that can look to, and if only very generally draw on, the philosophy of pragmatism with which many of the best-known home-grown American philosophers have been associated, and especially John Dewey.

Where secular liberals claim that religious affiliation and theological argument can have no place in the political sphere (or “public square”) of a modern multicultural democracy, their opponents argue that without traditions and identities of the kind that religious belief bestows, the “public square” can amount to no more than a moral wasteland, emptied of the ethical resources that are needed to sustain it. Between these two extremes, a few contributors to the debate (Nicholas Wolterstorff is here identified as one), who unusually combine theological conservatism with political liberalism, have pointed tellingly to a paradox within secular liberalism. Although it bases its case on inclusivism and on the need for the public square to be open to all, it then proceeds to close it to some, namely, those for whom religion truly is the touchstone of their lives.

To expose this contradictory attitude on the part of secularism, however, is not the same as showing what role religion can properly play. Stout’s answer (very briefly) is that the *formation* of political beliefs on religious grounds is perfectly acceptable within a democracy and has actually provided some of the most powerful, iconic instances of the American polity at its best—Lincoln on slavery, Martin Luther King on segregation. What is true, though, is that political *advocacy* in a modern democracy requires its participants to find a common language in which to convince and persuade others. This common language will not and cannot be that of any one religion in a country like America, which is composed of millions of citizens who believe in a thousand religions and none.

This seems a modest conclusion for a 300-page book to reach, but in the course of it Stout familiarizes the reader with the main lines of thought of the most prominent and influential American thinkers and shows fairly and elegantly that for many of these thinkers “the strategies of rhetorical excess that generated the excitement in the first place have outlived their usefulness” and makes good on his promise to save what is worth saving in them by recasting it in a different style.

My criticisms would be three. First, while to focus on America is understandable, it also reflects a certain kind of parochialism that is part of the problem. The dust jacket makes (perhaps token) reference to the book’s post-9/11 relevance. But part of the cause of 9/11, in my view, was the tendency of America to speak largely unto itself. More importantly, though relatedly, Stout leaves the concept of “democracy” wholly unanalyzed. His conception is defined by the American political tradition. As the troubled

history of postcolonial Africa shows so strikingly, political traditions cannot simply be transferred. Accordingly, when "democracy" is recommended as a political ideal that all societies have reason to aspire to, this must mean more than "be like us," but this book is silent on what that "more" might be.

One of the strengths of the book, and the pleasures in reading it, are the flashes of insight it contains, often both aptly and succinctly stated. One such is the remark that "history rarely works in the theory-driven way that philosophers and theologians imagine." I agree, but this raises a question over Stout's own book and with pragmatism more generally. A pragmatic solution is practically compelling but theoretically incomplete. How then can pragmatism be an adequate theory? More importantly, if it is a cogent philosophical theory, what could its practical relevance be, if history rarely works in a theory-driven way? At the start of the book, Stout commends Hegel's conception of how best to bring "the ethical life of a people to self-conscious expression." But Hegel was also insistent that "the Owl of Minerva takes its flight only at dusk."

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Martin-Schramm, James B., and Robert L. Stivers, *Christian Environmental Ethics: A Case Method Approach*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003. Pp. 325. \$20.00.

In *Christian Environmental Ethics: A Case Method Approach*, James Martin-Schramm and Robert Stivers take a close look at nine specific environmental scenarios. The authors analyze these scenarios from a number of angles. First, they portray the voices of those people and interest groups involved in the situation. Second, they describe the deliberations of one person, tracing how this person attempts to evaluate the many voices and form his/her own opinion. Third, and finally, they relate biblical themes to the situation at hand. As I assess this approach, the following strengths and weaknesses stand out.

First, Martin-Schramm and Stivers portray a variety of positions on environmental issues. Not only do they present voices in favor of protecting nature, they also present voices that underscore economic development and the creation of jobs. This is unlike so many discussions in environmental ethics, where frequently one position is advocated over others. Although the authors clearly promote specific biblical values, they do not restrict the positions they portray to those values. For example, in "Sustaining Dover," the authors portray not only groups such as the Appanoose River Alliance and

Dover Citizens for Sustainable Development but also those of Wal-Mart representatives, a citizen concerned about the future economic growth of his town, and dairy farmers who would welcome the chance to buy cheaper groceries and cleaning supplies. What is so valuable in this approach is that these many voices are taken seriously. So often opponents of environmental protection complain that environmentalists seem unconcerned about job creation, quality of life, and economic growth. Martin-Schramm and Stivers bring these concerns back into the conversation.

Second, Martin-Schramm and Stivers suggest five biblical principals to guide reflection on the environmental scenarios. These include (1) justice, (2) sustainability, (3) sufficiency, (4) participation, and (5) solidarity. On the one hand, these principles offer a workable and thoughtful framework. For example, in a separate introductory chapter, the authors discuss these five at length, drawing on both an analysis of biblical themes and current discussions on Christian environmental ethics. As a result, the authors solidly ground their principles. Furthermore, the identification of five concepts offers a helpful, workable framework. The principles help the reader hold together a complex variety of ethical norms, some of which frequently come into conflict in the scenarios. Most valuable here are the discussions on the third of these norms, sufficiency, where the authors discuss two distinct biblical traditions regarding wealth and consumption.

On the other hand, the authors do not keep this workable simplicity throughout the book. Unfortunately, under each of the nine scenarios, the authors do not apply the norms as clearly as would be hoped. They often retrace the biblical basis of the principles, at times adding several more concepts on top of the five. As a result, the reader's attention is distracted from the already detailed scenario, and the discussion can become difficult to follow. Nevertheless, despite this weakness, I recommend this book strongly. The variety of positions presented and the application of five workable principles make this work both useful and educational. I mention one last quality that makes this study unusual and valuable, a quality alluded to earlier. The last piece concerns the author's portrayal of one person's deliberations in each of the nine scenarios. Thanks to this effort, the authors not only provide a helpful framework for ethics but also model that framework in action. By this I mean that they show how one can think about environmental issues. One is left not only with a handful of abstract principles but with nine examples of how to apply these principles. As a result, the reader is pulled into the quandaries on a more personal, engaged manner.

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Brown, Candy Gunther. *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789-1880*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. Pp. 336 + xiv. Cloth \$59.95; paper \$19.95.

Candy Gunther Brown's book, *The Word in the World*, is an interdisciplinary study that provides a pioneering and in-depth analysis of nineteenth-century American evangelicalism by looking at the intersection of religious history and book history. Brown's narrative, which extends from the establishment of the Methodist Book Concern in 1789 to the publication of the bestseller *Ben Hur* in 1880, covers a period in which innovations in printing, publishing, and transportation significantly increased the volume and variety of printed materials available to the public. Brown's research focuses on the middle decades of the nineteenth century and shows how at that time evangelical Protestants created a distinct and formative print culture with a dual mission: to be a transformative presence in the world and to maintain a nonconformative purity from it.

Brown challenges assumptions that nineteenth-century American evangelicals were primarily concerned with using texts for conversion and that their entry into the print market signaled cultural concessions or the commoditization of religion. Brown argues that evangelicals were concerned with cultivating daily progress in faith that was in but not of the world. Based on their views of the incarnation, the Great Commission, and the Holy Spirit's sanctifying use of the Word across time, space, and language, evangelicals believed that the Holy Spirit could reveal the divine Word through their own human words. With caution and energy, they appropriated popular genres and forms and effective marketing and publication techniques "to incarnate an ineffable sacred story into the world of lived experience." The result of this work was the formation of a textual community that understood itself primarily as a pilgrim community being sanctified through life for the world to come.

Brown's book is divided into two parts: the first depicts the world of evangelical print culture and the second explores some of its uses. In the first part Brown discusses the sophistication with which denominational, non-denominational, and trade publishers disseminated religious publications through the print market to express and reinforce evangelical beliefs, values, and narratives. She describes the "conservative-progressive" publishing spirit that offered the American reading public an expanding canon of texts, which included such "steady sellers" as Richard Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest* as well as such bestsellers as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. And she examines the textual practices employed by writers and readers to help

them place individual temporal experiences within a shared atemporal framework. To illustrate the uses of this culture, in the second part of her book Brown shows the importance of the periodical form, for defending the faith and empowering all believers to do the same, and of hymnal genres for sanctifying and unifying evangelicals.

This evangelical print culture contained a number of tensions: Word and world, eternal and temporal, universal and local, community and individual, textual and local communities, clerical and lay authority, and societies and denominations. Many of these tensions were, to some extent, reconciled; but other tensions—particularly racial, regional, and political tensions—were not. If, as Mark Noll has argued, the Civil War marked the end of evangelicals' mastery of America's interpretive systems, evangelicals' mastery of its communication systems persists to this day. Thus, Brown concludes her book not with an elegy for American evangelicalism but rather with a discussion of the *Left Behind* series and the *Prayer of Jabez*.

One criticism of Brown's work concerns her conception of a unified evangelical culture. Evidence of such unity may be seen in the work of certain nondenominational publication societies, but this unity is belied by the myriad intradenominational and extradenominational conflicts between evangelicals in the nineteenth century. The decision of the board of the nondenominational American Sunday School Union to change the title of Charles Hodge's popular statement of Christian faith from *The Narrow Way* to *The Way of Life* may represent a desire to avoid sectarianism, but the editorial work done to get the anti-Wesleyan hymn "Rock of Ages" into a Methodist hymnal represents something quite different. What is lost by not focusing on the varieties of and changes in evangelicalism during the nineteenth century is an opportunity to see distinctions between diverse and often compleptive evangelical print cultures.

The history of the church is a history of communication techniques and technologies. Compelled to spread the good news, Christians have exploited the oral, manuscript, and print media that have been available to them. As we now add to the words that issue from the pulpit and the press the increasingly dominant electronic word, it is helpful to (re)consider how Christians have managed previous communication revolutions. *The Word in the World*, which presents nineteenth-century evangelicals' struggles to avoid the extremes of presence (conformity) and purity (irrelevance), should prove informative to anyone interested in the challenges and opportunities that accompany media shifts.

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E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian: A Study in Political Relations* (2nd. ed.; Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers Inc., 2001). Pp. vii + 595. \$51.00.

In this valuable and highly readable volume, Mary Smallwood, professor of Romano-Jewish history at Queen's University in Belfast, has cast over 260 years of political history into a coherent, flowing narrative, reconstructing events mainly between the Roman army's first arrival in Palestine under Pompey in 65 B.C. and Diocletian's "removal of the core of the Roman garrison of Palestine further away from Galilee" in the waning years of the third century A.D. That these two events delimit the period under consideration, forming an *inclusio* around the main body of the book, is telling in at least three ways. First, in the absence of any explicit statement on the matter, this *inclusio* is the only justification given, if it is such, for how the chronological limits of the book, and in particular its chosen ending place with Diocletian, have been set. Second, the events that form the *inclusio* also signal that the book's prevailing interest is decidedly in Palestine. Though six out of twenty-one chapters make significant forays into the Diaspora to help round out the picture, the beginning and end of the book as well as the central and most detailed chapters all focus upon Palestine. Third, as the *inclusio* also might intimate, sustained attention throughout the book is upon the military aspect of political relations, rather than on other cultural, ethnic, linguistic, ideological, legal, or other components. In conjunction with this interest in military action, Smallwood repeatedly underscores her view that the almost unbroken Roman policy of toleration of Jewish religion led to protracted military conflict with Jewish nationalism and defined the nature of that conflict and its aftermath.

Without a word about context, method, or governing interests for the writing of this particular volume, Smallwood's narrative commences immediately with an introductory chapter that provides a useful sketch of Jewish political fortunes leading up to and necessitating the Roman involvement that crystallized in Pompey's 65 B.C. appearance. Deftly navigating the complicated developments of Jewish struggle against its Seleucid overlord, Smallwood emphasizes how Roman involvement in Jewish affairs was motivated not by altruism but by pragmatism. In their struggles for independence, the Jews inadvertently contributed to Roman interests in keeping Seleucid ambition in check. However, while Hasmonean solicitation and cultivation of status as Rome's ally was done in the interest of independence from Syria, Judaea's resultant status as Rome's client eventually led it out of the frying

pan and into the fire. As Rome's imperial interests and presence in the east increased, culminating in its annexation of Syria in 63 B.C., Jewish semi-independence was gradually but unmistakably eroded.

The reliance of Hasmonean contenders upon Rome for legitimization as high priest and/or ethnarch, under Pompey and then Julius Caesar, is narrated in chapter two, followed by an account of Herod's rise to position of client king in chapters three and four. To Smallwood, the key to Herod's success lay in his purely secular power. Since as an Idumaean he could not serve as high priest, Herod's position as a relative outsider in Judaea made him more dependent on Rome than his Hasmonean predecessors had been. Because of this, Herod's reign strengthened the Roman grip upon Palestine, leading to Judaea's transition from client kingdom to province in A.D. 6 (chapter five).

Having up to this point followed events in Palestine, the progression of the narrative is interrupted in chapter six for a survey of "The Diaspora and Jewish Religious Liberty" that begins back in 587 B.C. and traces developments up to A.D. 2-3. From this point on, Smallwood oscillates back and forth, advancing the story of Palestine chronologically and then catching up events in the Diaspora in summary fashion to that point. Thus, chapter seven treats "The province of Judaea, A.D. 6-41," with particular attention given to inept mismanagement under Pontius Pilate and the near catastrophe of Gaius's intended defilement of the Jerusalem temple. During this period, Smallwood locates the seeds of later conflict; Rome's fatal error lay in failing to address the endemic Jewish perspective that "religion and politics were inextricably bound up together as two facets of a single way of life." Unwittingly, Roman tolerance of Jewish religion allowed Jewish nationalism to incubate. Chapter 8 treats the ethnarchies of Philip, Antipas, and Agrippa I, leading to the latter's eventual kingship. Chapters nine and ten then update the Diaspora story through this same period, surveying Jewish experience in Rome and in Egypt, respectively.

In the next three chapters (11-13), which together comprise 100 pages, the narrative slows down to describe the progression of events in Palestine after A.D. 44 (chapter 11) leading up to "The war of A.D. 66-70" (chapter 12) and "The new dispensation in Judaea" (chapter 13). Smallwood repeatedly emphasizes the causes on both sides that led to the war. Rome's two main mistakes were inept and insensitive administration by her governors and insufficient military presence in the region that allowed increased terrorism. On the Jewish side, Smallwood especially highlights the unrealistic religious

ideology of “extreme nationalists,” who were undeterred by the moderate, sensible “peace-party” and whose hopes were nurtured by the success of unsuppressed brigands. In describing Vespasian’s and then Titus’s actions in the aftermath of the war, Smallwood highlights Rome’s steadfast tolerance for the Jewish religion. Judaism remained a *religio licita* and continued to enjoy many of its special privileges, with the exception of the replacement of the temple tax by the more burdensome and humiliating *laographia*. Chapter 13 concludes with a mere four and a half pages on postwar “Events in the Province of Judaea to 115.”

In chapter 14, attention reverts back to the Diaspora in “A.D. 66–70 and After” and provides sections on Antioch, Alexandria, Cyrenaica, and Italy, sketching vignettes as evidence allows up to A.D. 115, and with a separate section devoted to the relationship of Titus and Berenice. Chapter 15 recounts the Diaspora revolt, with separate sections on Cyrenaica and Egypt, Cyprus (three pages), and Mesopotamia (where Jews made common cause against Rome with their former Parthian oppressors). Interestingly, despite admitting that evidence is “indirect, allusive and scanty,” Smallwood contends that disturbances in Palestine at the time of the Diaspora revolt were not merely a “sympathetic restlessness” but in fact “an incipient revolt which prompt Roman action prevented from developing into a serious fullscale one.” An important component of her argument involves “the *a priori* improbability” that Palestine would be entirely at rest while the Diaspora revolted.

In chapter 16, Smallwood returns to Palestine and the Bar Cochba revolt. She concludes that, as with events leading up to A.D. 70, this war was caused by endemic Jewish nationalism aggravated by Roman offenses against Jewish religion. Following Bar Cochba, events are traced out into the relatively peaceful Antonine (chapter 17) and Severan (chapter 18) periods. Chapter 19 rounds out treatment of the Diaspora in the second and third centuries A.D. before Chapter 20 brings events in Palestine full circle with Diocletian’s Augustus-like reestablishment of political order out of chaos and his eventual removal of troops from Galilee because “the Jews were by this time regarded as peaceable and trustworthy.” In addition to a summary, chapter 21 provides a thumbnail sketch of Jewish relations with post-Constantinian Rome.

Upon reflection, Smallwood has masterfully addressed an immense subject, chronologically and geographically, with the skill to produce not just a coherent account but a truly readable narrative. Her impressive command of detailed evidence is combined with a judicious use of scholarly supposition, in

the face of sometimes minimal available evidence. A particularly interesting use of evidence is her continual, insightful analysis of Jewish and Roman coinage, which is a sustained leitmotif. The usefulness of the book is enhanced by three maps, a chart of the Herodian family, six appendices, and an adequate index at the end (although the current indexing, consisting basically of a subject index, could be greatly enhanced by an index of references to primary literature). This book's value truly merits its still being in print over 25 years after the appearance of its first edition.

Notwithstanding the praise it deserves, Smallwood's work can be critiqued primarily for the pro-Roman bias that her narrative voice casts over the events of her story. Throughout the work, Smallwood occupies herself mainly with telling a story, not with overtly stating and defending a particular thesis. Yet in the telling of the story, a particular bias is apparent against Jewish nationalism whenever it conflicts with political pragmatism. When her narrative represents a Jewish interpretation of events, it typically notes that a partisan perspective is being recorded. But Smallwood's own voice consistently narrates events from a Roman vantage point and blends, sometimes imperceptibly, with that of Roman interests. As one example, she comments that Agrippa I's death was a blessing in disguise because he was too independent a ruler for Roman good. More pervasively, Smallwood characterizes the Jews that "opposed Roman rule of any kind on principle" as unreasonable radicals, "extreme nationalists." Instead, she favors the pragmatism of moderates. As certainly as this mirrors Josephus, her ancient counterpart and most heavily utilized source, so she comments positively on how he portrays the upper class "in the best possible light," namely, "as men who appreciated the folly and futility of opposition to Rome and were an influence for good over the rest of the community." Tellingly, Smallwood's normal pragmatic bias becomes more evident in contrast to her momentary opposition to pragmatism at the trial of Jesus. Revealing her sympathy with the Christian cause (unlike with Jewish nationalism), she says that ultimately Pilate "must stand condemned for his final capitulation" to Jesus' accusers. At points, Smallwood's narrative even veers dangerously close to denigrating all Jews, such as when she attributes the greater success Herod's son Philip enjoyed as ethnarch, compared to his two brothers, to the fact that "his subjects were largely gentiles who would accept him on his merits." Nevertheless, while this persistently one-sided perspective is problematic, especially for its subtlety, the enduring value of the work as a whole still remains.

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Brueggemann, Walter. *Inscribing the Text: Sermons and Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*. Edited by Anna Carter Florence. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004. Pp. 222. \$22.00.

For preachers who so rarely get to listen to sermons, Walter Brueggemann's work demands a place on the shelf. The current volume of sermons and prayers will serve to teach and inspire. In typical Brueggemann fashion, the reader (listener) is invited into the world of the text. The conversation launches from there. Whether you choose to read it from cover to cover or one sermon or prayer at a time, the conversation there in the study will always be challenging and stimulating.

With her concern for preachers, Anna Carter Florence has put together a Brueggemann sermon collection with some added benefits. Each sermon comes with a context. The reader ought to take note of date and place, of settings, like the seminary campus, Montreat, or a congregation. The context tells of congregational anniversaries and seminary presidential installations. Paying close attention to the dates can give insight into Brueggemann's theological journey in a post-September 11 world. The biblical texts are often taken from the lectionary. However, the scriptural index at the end of the book is very helpful for preachers who may want to see how Brueggemann tackled a particular text.

The selected prayers certainly serve as more than transition pages between printed sermons! The prayers themselves are contextual. The prayers, printed in poetic fashion, invite the reader to dwell on the use of language and imagery. With these prayers, one can sit in a Brueggeman classroom or travel to a gathering for worship at Montreat. In every case, the privilege of reading these prayers results in some insight into how the author approaches a biblical text and how he views the world. Prepare to mark the pages in some fashion, because you will want to come to the prayers and sit with them for a while.

Perhaps the most important lasting benefit of this "sermon collection plus" is the entry titled "The Preacher as Scribe." Here we have not a sermon but an address. In their drive to utilize Brueggemann's sermons in pulling together their own sermons each Sunday, preachers ought not to miss the importance of this essay. In her forward, the editor describes this brief essay as "a concise homiletic that proposes a radical shift in the way we think about and embody the act of preaching." I agree with the sense of importance here. With the address now in print, I would expect others to now engage the metaphor of preacher as scribe. At the very least, pastors can ponder the weekly task of preaching in a fresh way.

Amid these added benefits, this current sermon collection is vintage Brueggemann, which is to say, there are characteristics and qualities that we have come to expect in Walter Brueggemann's preaching. It will come as no surprise to the reader that the preacher spends far more time working with the Old Testament than with the New Testament. Few preachers can make a biblical narrative come alive like Walter Brueggemann can. These sermons are no different. While being drawn into the biblical world as a listener, the reader would do well to remember that what Brueggemann does is extremely difficult. With his understanding of narrative and a poet's skill of language, Brueggemann retells the biblical story and allows for only the most subtle turn to the contemporary context.

Notice, too, when Brueggemann does turn to the world of his listener, it is rarely an individual turn. His concern for the contemporary is much more a concern for the collective. Rather than an individual's encounter with the gospel, Brueggeman sets his sights on the church's encounter with the Kingdom of God. And so these sermons are full of economics and talk of power and references to the nations. Those on the receiving end of these sermons are challenged to move beyond their own narrow vision to ponder a glimpse of God's concern for the world. When you find yourself so drawn into the world of the biblical text that your own corner of life is redefined in terms of God and kingdom and hope, then you know you have encountered the preaching and prayer life of Walter Brueggemann.

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Dawson, John David. *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Pp. 302. \$50.00

Theodore of Mopsuestia rejected Origen's allegorical biblical interpretation as the blameworthy imitation of a Jew, Philo. For Theodore, to allegorize was to Judaize. Daniel Boyarin has recently condemned Origen's allegorical work, not for being too Jewish but for disconnecting the Old Testament from its literal addressees: Jews, ancient or modern. Dawson's *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* responds to Boyarin, as well as to the views on allegory of Erich Auerbach and Hans Frei. Dawson is Professor of Religion and Comparative Literature at Haverford College, where he also holds the title of Constance and Robert MacCrate Professor in Social Responsibility. His titles reflect various areas of expertise, each of which contributes to this elegantly argued and creative book.

The introduction situates Dawson's book within a larger concern for the

politics or ethics of biblical interpretation, by reviewing theological debates in 1930s Germany, where even some who defended the continuing validity of the Old Testament rejected any connection between it and Judaism. Dawson then writes, "In the pages that follow, I ask whether there is a kind of Christian reading of the Old Testament that might express Christianity's relation to Judaism while respecting the independent religious identity of Jews, and, more broadly, the diverse identities of all human beings."

Part 1 (Figural Reading and the Body) responds to Boyarin's claim that when Paul and Origen read the Old Testament figuratively or spiritually, as opposed to literally, they destroy the literal "body" of the scriptural text and thereby assault the concrete identity of physical Israel according to the flesh, that is, Jews. Boyarin's semiotic analysis of Paul and Origen causes him to see flesh and spirit/literal and figural as utterly disconnected binary oppositions. Rejecting such semiotic categories, Dawson argues that for Paul and Origen the figural does not erase the literal but transforms it. (Of special interest in this section to New Testament interpreters is a treatment of Richard Hays's reading of 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 [29-37]). Paul and Origen are not dealing in semiotic categories but are concerned with the transformative work of God. For Origen, God's activity transforms not only the Old Testament but also its readers, whose own bodies are likewise spiritually transformed yet not erased. Dawson argues, then, (1) that Boyarin misconstrues Origen's allegorical interests, and (2) that, when read properly, Origen actually accomplishes what Boyarin seeks in critiquing Origen in the first place: the preservation of the literal body of the text. The same approach applies in Parts 2 (Figural Reading and History) and 3 (Figural Reading and Identity), where Dawson similarly engages the opinions on allegory of Erich Auerbach, who argues that Origen undermines not bodies but history, and Hans Frei.

In the end, this is a great book. For a study so indebted to literary and cultural theory, the prose is clear and straightforward. I would have appreciated closer attention to only one matter. As stated above, Dawson hopes not only to rescue Origen (and Paul, *contra* Boyarin) against charges of erasing bodies and history but also to clarify "the assumptions about textual meaning that Christians must avoid if they are to be true to their *vocation of fashioning their religious identity while respecting human diversity...*" (italics mine). But Dawson inadequately explains how he understands this vocation. Would Paul or Origen accept such a thing, stated in this way, as a Christian vocation? Furthermore, Dawson demonstrates elegantly that figural reading does not privilege the spiritual/figural at the utter expense of the literal/corporeal/historical in the way that some have argued. But he also recognizes that Boyarin and others are onto something, writing, "This perspective is clearly

not the simple repudiation of letter, law, and Judaism that Boyarin describes (and many Christians have enacted)—and to this extent the charge of supersessionism is unwarranted. But neither is it the easy, liberal laissez-faire stance that modern Christians often hope to assume—and to this extent the charge of supersessionism may still have force.” The book ends, therefore, on an ambiguous note, with the reader wondering whether or not Dawson has found what he sought in writing the book. I would have appreciated greater attention, then, to how Dawson sees Origen navigating the line between supersessionism and contemporary laissez-faire liberalism, fashioning his religious identity while respecting human diversity. Regardless, I highly recommend this fascinating study to anyone interested in patristics, biblical hermeneutics, ethics, or theology.

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Watson, Hubert Manohar, *Towards a Relevant Christology in India Today: An Appraisal of the Christologies of John Hick, Jürgen Moltmann and Jon Sobrino*. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. Pp. 310. \$62.95.

How can a genuinely Indian Christology be articulated in the religiously pluralistic and economically challenging context of India? How do the people of India respond to Jesus’ question, “Who do you say I am?” These are the main questions Watson explores in *Towards a Relevant Christology in India Today*, a revised version of his doctoral dissertation. Watson is currently teaching at the Karnataka Theological College in Mangalore, India.

The central task taken up in this book is to analyze different contemporary approaches to Christology from an Indian perspective. Issues discussed include: (a) *Mystical dimension of Christology*. Sadhu Sunder Singh and others show that the relevance of Indian Christology lies in the mystical faith rather than historical investigation of Jesus. (b) *Vedic relevance*. Because Vedic Hinduism dominates the religious and cultural fabric of India, Brahmo Bandav Upadyaya and others show how such Christology can be formulated in Hindu religious terms. (c) *Plurality of religions*. India is a home of many religions. Therefore, a Christology of the Christian minority in India must be open toward other religions and dialogue with others. Samartha and others show that, rather than being exclusive, their Christology needs to consider other theologies and the people of other faiths as their co-pilgrims. (d) *Theology of the marginalized ethnic communities*. A. P. Nirmal and others help to make sense of a Christology to the marginalized, mainly to the dalits. (e) *Theology of humanization and liberation*. Poverty, marginalization, enslavement,

ment, oppression, and dehumanization are major characteristics of the Indian populace.

Subsequent chapters present the Christologies of three modern theologians: John Hick, Jürgen Moltmann, and John Sobrino, who represent religious pluralism, systematic theology, and liberation theology, respectively. Hick rejects both exclusive and inclusive approaches on other religions as Christian arrogance. His main contention is that the new reality of religious pluralism has made it essential to seriously consider other religions. "There is not merely one way but a plurality of ways of salvation or liberation...there is a plurality of divine revelations, making possible a plurality of forms of saving human response." Although Watson appreciates Hick's awareness of religious plurality, he rejects him for two reasons: first, he is not useful in relating Christology to the context of sociopolitical and economic realities of India, an act that is crucial for any Christology; and second, Hick's solution for religious pluralism, which accepts all religions as equally valid ways to the Ultimate, does not help the Christian community in India.

Watson shifts to Moltmann to achieve what Hick lacks. Moltmann is popularly known for his "theology of hope." This hope does not rest on the distant future on the "last things"; rather, for him, the "future" empowers the present. What is impressive for Watson is Moltmann's theology of the cross, which can be a useful tool for interfaith dialogue in India, because it touches the core of Indian life: socioeconomic realities such as poverty and suffering. "The 'cross' can be a meeting place for people of different faiths who seek a new humanity—in a Christian language, the Kingdom of God." In the crucified Christ, we see the future of God. The cross brings meaning to the present in the light of the inrushing future of the anticipated Kingdom. Latin American theologian John Sobrino tries to expose human realities in the Third World and articulates a theology on the basis of liberation praxis. For Watson, Sobrino's Christology from a Third World perspective is equally relevant to the Indian context. Both Moltmann and Sobrino are helpful, therefore, in searching for a relevant Christology in India, as both take theology from its *ortho-doxy* toward *ortho-praxis*.

"In order to make faith in Christ more relevant and meaningful" for India, Watson argues, "christology should be done in the Indian context using Indian culture, way of life and thought-forms. Mere import or translation of the christologies, which are done in western contexts, have only little relevance in India, because they are done in response to particular contexts. Hence, they cannot effectively respond to Indian needs." However, in seeming contradiction of his own argument, the author selects three non-Indian Western theologians as major contributors to his work. Watson's rationale is

that Westerners have contributed a great deal in articulating Christian dogmas. Although one can never underestimate the contributions of these great theologians, in view of taking up a theological task for India, it would have been more relevant if Indian theologians, who are already in the struggle of developing theology in India, were selected.

An Indian counterpart to John Hick, such as Stanley Samartha, would have enriched the author's Christological perspectives in the context of religious pluralism. Similarly, it may be difficult for an Indian reader to understand why Moltmann's theology of the Cross is more significant than that of an Indian theologian such as M. M. Thomas, to whom the author briefly refers. No doubt, Moltmann's theology of suffering could have a huge impact on the suffering masses in India of all faith orientations, but matters such as centering the cross as a common symbol for all faiths could be problematic in the pluralistic context. Instead of a symbol, one may rather consider drawing "symbols" together in dialogue for their common struggle against the oppressive structures that enslave them.

Meanwhile, regarding the use of liberation theology and its Marxist social analysis for India, the warning of theologians such as A. P. Nirmal cannot be ignored. He argues that the context of the caste system, which is the primary cause for economic hardship and exploitative structure in India, according to Marxist analysis of the society, is not an adequate option, although it is not totally irrelevant. It is also important in a book such as this to explain why one person is studied instead of the other within the same school of theology. For example, although the author made an initial description of Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff, who were also very significant in the formulation of liberation theology, why was Sobrino taken up while leaving behind those stalwarts? Similarly, the reader needs to know what role Indian theologians described in chapter three play in the author's construction of a relevant Indian Christology. Despite some remaining questions, this book is an important addition to the literature, because it enables readers to become familiar with various debates in Christology in the contemporary world.

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Gundry, Robert H. *Jesus the Word According to John the Sectaria: A Paleo-fundamentalist Manifesto for Contemporary Evangelicalism, Especially Its Elites, in North America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. Pp. 137. \$14.00.

As the title of this provocative book suggests, Robert Gundry here attempts to pry American evangelicals loose from their infatuation with worldly status and comforts, calling them back to the fundamentals of the Gospel—

the purported center of the movement's existence. In doing so, he seizes upon an appropriate text—the Gospel of John—which calls both for unfettered devotion to Christ the *Logos* and for the willingness to be “in” the world but not “of” it. In developing his exhortation, Gundry argues for the willingness to embrace a sectarian existence rather than to sacrifice one’s faith commitments upon the pagan altars of affluence, social acceptability, and intellectual compromise. In that sense, this book presents itself as markedly distinct from predictably urbane and tempered treatments of biblical themes. It consults the best of a broad spectrum of biblical and religious literature with a sharp interest in making a real difference in the world today, and it does so with passion and verve.

Gundry introduces his task with a “foreword,” distinguishing the particular interest of this work from other biblical studies. In an attempt to rescue propositional truth from movements toward personalistic appraisals of it, he devotes his first chapter, then nearly half of the book, to accounting for the many ways Jesus’ discourse with humanity through his teachings and dialogues “exegetes” the truth of God to the world (Jn 1:18). In so doing, Gundry shows with remarkable clarity the extent to which Jesus, his works, and his teachings all play a central role in God’s redemptive communication with humanity, substantiating a *Logos*-centered reform. Attempting to fit Jesus’ dialogical activity into doctrinal propositions, however (Gundry translates it: in the beginning was *the Proposition*), may be contrary to the very structure of Johannine epistemology. In the beginning of his book, Gundry declares his aversion to “the living truth,” or a view of truth as a “living reality,” but this inclination seems countered by the very evidence he marshals. After all, the emphasis of Johannine Christology is that the Word became *flesh*—a subject, not an object or a propositionalistic notion.

Gundry’s second chapter appropriates recent sectarian appraisals of Johannine Christianity toward asking whether we have become too smug in our worldly ways rather than being willing to challenge the *cosmos* and its empty lore in the name of the truth. Here Gundry appropriately draws in also the situation of the Johannine Epistles, and he calls for a renewed commitment to a life of sacrifice if required by the truth. In taking seriously recent sectarian appraisals of the Johannine situation, however, Gundry’s image of Johannine sectarianism appears overly isolationist. Separation from “the world” as a consequence of faithfulness is different from its being a goal. Johannine Christianity itself was far more permeable in its boundaries and multilateral in its struggles than a strictly sectarian perspective would allow, so this reader comes away from Gundry’s book feeling that strict or isola-

tionalist sectarianism probably misrepresents the early Christian world—even the Johannine sector of it.

In his third chapter, Gundry throws down the gauntlet hard, declaring that the “scandal of the evangelical mind pales before the scandal of evangelical acculturation.” What Gundry has in mind here is no small critique of a particular group; he is challenging directly the subversion of the Christian calling of many an emerging evangelical leader, who, in the interest of obtaining academic credentials or intellectual respectability, has in the process muted his or her commitment to the Gospel, or even abandoned it altogether. The way forward, according to Gundry, is a recommitment to what he believes is the foundational Johannine Christology of the Word—calling believers to be critically engaged with the world, seeking to transform it with divine love and right thinking rather than being conformed to it, subverted by something lesser.

Despite the passion of its appeal, however, the book has several problems. One impression is that although Gundry cites a vast spectrum of first-rate Johannine secondary literature, his citing of a monograph at times serves only as a means of pointing to a view with which he disagrees, that point often being not the main argument of the piece being engaged but a tangential one. More constructive uses of secondary literature rather than combative ones would also have strengthened the piece. On the prizing of truth over prestige, this calling is relevant to liberals as well as conservatives, so one would hope that evangelicals—and liberals—could unite around seeking the truth, wherever it might lead.

More problematic, Gundry appears to have overlooked the most distinctive feature of John’s Christology: its *dialectical and tension-filled character* (Barrett’s important essay on the dialectical theology of St. John, for instance, is neither cited nor included in the bibliography). Church history is replete with examples of individuals or groups who emphasized one aspect of a Johannine christological duality, and their monological approaches (yes, and even propositionally so) became regarded as heretical. Time after time, the remedy has been to restore the *other side* of the Johannine witness on a particular matter, and these conjunctive moves restore the dynamic character of the Fourth Evangelist’s dialectical Christology. But here, Johannine Christology, if understood rightly, becomes a striking *corrective* to fundamentalism rather than a bolsterer of it. As the Revealer challenges—in the name of the living God—all that is of human origin, not only does the Johannine Jesus become an affront to entrenched Judaism two millennia ago; he becomes a challenge to *Christian* dogmatism, as well. While fundamentalism may have indeed bowed the knee to modernism in coveting the materialistic spoils of

socioreligious triumph, it may have sinned further in confining understandings of truth to categories of objectivism and empirically ascertained knowledge, when the revealing truth of the living God—as revealed in the Johannine *Logos*—also encompasses subjective categories of being, essence, and existence.

Gundry's book closes with a cluster of engaging endnote essays, each of which draws contemporary meaning from interesting Johannine themes. In conclusion, if a new evangelicalism (or even a new liberalism) could emerge as a result of Gundry's critique and its ensuing discussions, this will have been an important book! What is needed is a genuinely good-news movement that embraces the dynamism of living truth without being subjectivistic, and that embraces the power of worthy beliefs without becoming propositionalistic. Such would bring a new day for all seekers of truth, not just evangelicals. If that were to take place, however, sectarian isolation, although genuinely risked, might not be the result after all. Indeed, the dynamism of the Gospel—authentically represented, and incarnationally so—might yet have a *winsome* effect upon the world rather than an alienating one. So, thanks, Bob, for the provocative book! In considering it, one is reminded of the counsel of James Parnell, that 19-year-old Quaker martyr: "Be willing that self shall suffer for Truth, and not the Truth for self."

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Story, Cullen I. K. *The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Mark: Introduction and Commentary*. Longwood: Xulon Press, 2004. Pp. 363. \$21.00 paper; \$32.00 hardcover.

The author of this new commentary on the gospel of Mark is well known and esteemed by many of his colleagues at Princeton Seminary and by a large number of former students at Princeton to whom he taught Greek and who studied in Biblical courses under his direction. In his more than thirty years of teaching he offered three times a course on Mark, and the new commentary is the fruit of an intensive study of this gospel that extended over many decades. The book, illustrated with drawings by Anne Baumgartner, is clearly organized, with a 34-page introduction, 283 pages of commentary on Mark's text, and 79 pages of endnotes and a general index.

The title of Dr. Story's work provides the clue for the understanding of Mark's Gospel that dominates the entire commentary. The very first word of this Gospel, "beginning," so Dr. Story insists, covers the entire account of Jesus' life and work, down to the women's discovery of the empty tomb. "The

beginning of the gospel" means for Mark not the initial sections of his narrative, such as the account of John the Baptist or the stories of Jesus' baptism and temptation. Rather, Mark's collection of traditions about Jesus in its totality is not the gospel but the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The beginning implies a continuation, and Mark remembers the works and sayings of Jesus not as a pure historian who is concerned primarily about the past but as a theological historian for whom the good news extends beyond Jesus' lifetime. The church is implicit in the Jesus story, and Mark's work is misunderstood if it is not perceived as a call to the spreading of the good news by the church.

Dr. Story sets out to show that Mark's narrative of Jesus' works and words is couched in language suggesting that these events and oracles call out for continuance. This thesis is bolstered by close attention to grammatical details in Mark's Greek. The entire commentary is permeated by discussions of the use and meaning of tenses, especially of the difference between aorist and imperfect verb forms in Mark's narrative. Employing these grammatical tools, Dr. Story proposes a reading of the whole gospel in which the Jesus story is viewed as the beginning of God's good news, which rushes forward toward the mission of the church.

The commentary claims that all major themes of the second Gospel bear the mark of this overarching design. Some examples may illustrate this point. In accounts of Jesus' *Healing Ministry*, two clusters of summary statements are rendered in the imperfect tense (Mk. 3:11–12; 6:56), indicating that the healings that took place in the past reflect a habitual practice of the healer. The healing ministry of the disciples is equally described in phrases that connote continuance; three imperfect tenses in 6:13 intimate that the disciples' healings have the same drive toward continuance as do Jesus' acts. The parable of the four soils that opens the collection of *Parables* in Mark 4 shows a striking differentiation in the use of tenses describing the effects of the types of soil in which the seed cannot produce lasting fruit, and the good soil that yields a rich harvest (4:2–9). The impact of the three types of bad soil is put consistently in the aorist tense (momentary past), whereas the effect of the good soil is rendered by imperfect and present tenses, carrying the notion of "an enduring and extraordinary harvest of grain." In his exegesis of the two feeding stories in Mark, Dr. Story joins numerous predecessors in underscoring the links between the feeding stories and the account of the last supper: the feeding stories are announcements and anticipations of the *Eucharist*. But going beyond his predecessors, he demonstrates that the language of the feeding stories uses the imperfect tense when speaking of Jesus "giving" the bread, whereas the last supper scene uses the same word

twice in the aorist. From this observation he draws the conclusion that “once for all time, Jesus ‘gave’ the bread and the cup of the Eucharist to his disciples, a pre-figuring of the once-for-all ransom price, the sacrifice of Jesus himself, given for others (Mk. 10:45). Yet, in successive eucharistic services, disciples hold the responsibility and privilege of serving fellow believers frequently Jesus’ gifts of bread and the fruit of the vine in remembrance of him.” In light of this consistent rush toward the future continuation of Jesus’ work in Mark’s Gospel, it is not surprising to see the end of the evangelist’s account in the story of the women’s discovery of the *Empty Tomb*. Here, again two imperfect and two aorist forms of verbs combine to depict the action of the women as expressions of the trembling and ecstasy that “continued to possess them” and in which “they continued to be in awe.” Thus, from beginning to end, Mark’s narration is “The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ According to Mark.”

This new commentary offers a strikingly fresh description of the kerygmatic design of Mark’s Gospel. It provides great help for the serious student of Mark by an interpreter whose engagement with the good news shines through on every page of his work.

Ulrich W. Mauser
Princeton Theological Seminary, Emeritus

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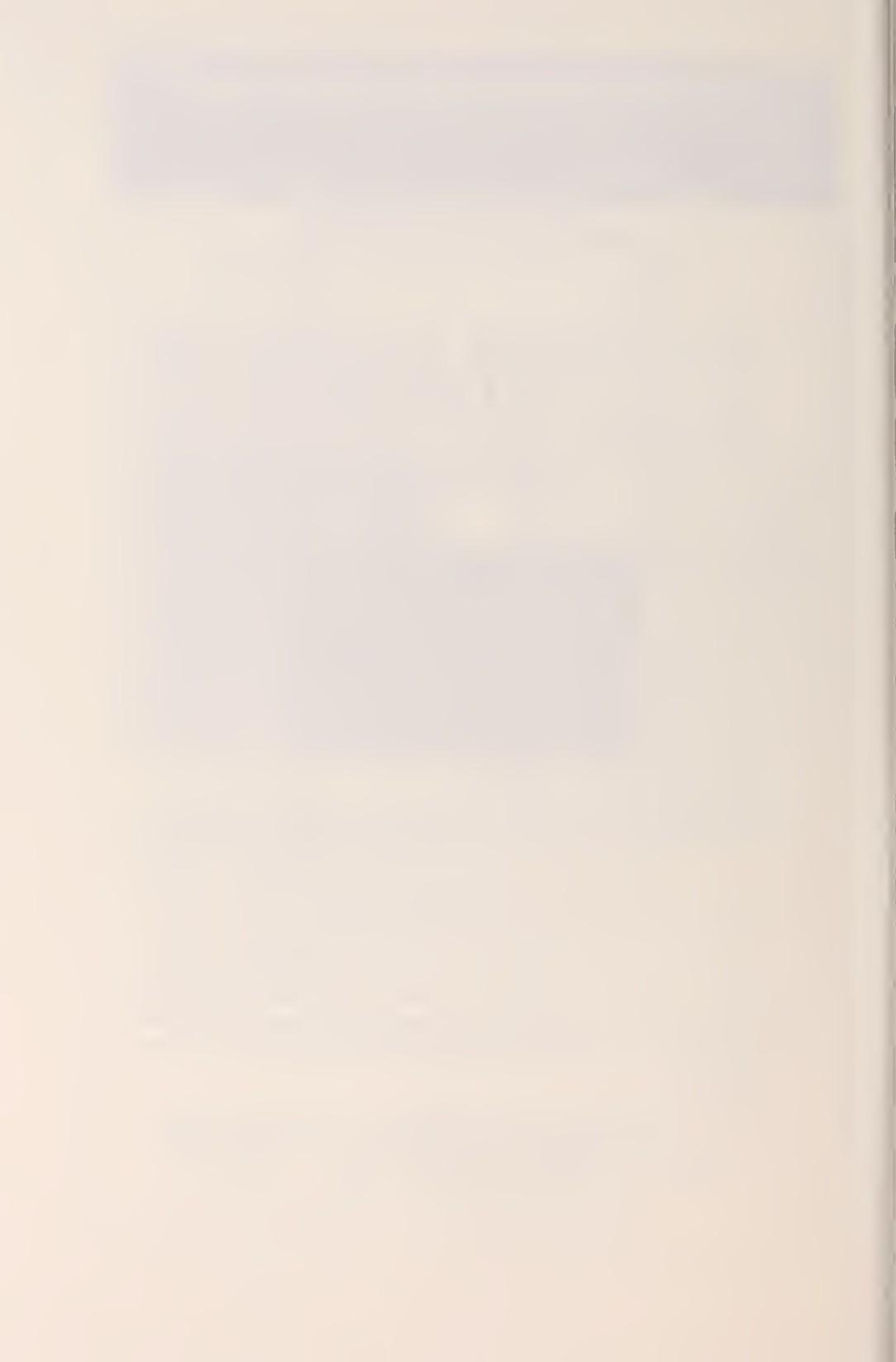


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